

# THE PLACE OF PROVENANCE

## *Regional Styles in Tibetan Painting*

DAVID P. JACKSON



RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART









This catalog is published in conjunction with an exhibition organized and presented by the Rubin Museum of Art, New York, October 12, 2012, through March 25, 2013, and curated by David P. Jackson and Karl Debreczeny. *The Place of Provenance* is the fourth volume in the Masterworks of Tibetan Painting Series by David P. Jackson, published by the Rubin Museum of Art, New York, and distributed by the University of Washington Press, Seattle and London.

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## FOREWORD

PATRICK SEARS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

FOR THIS still-young museum, which opened to the public in 2004, the long view is just beginning to come into focus. Our early years were filled with laying the groundwork, opening the museum, seeing to its efficient functioning, and then servicing a rapidly expanding set of public expectations as audiences grew. But even in these nascent years, there was one significant long-term project in our sights: the eight-volume, multi-exhibition series *Masterworks of Tibetan Paintings*. With this current volume and accompanying exhibition, we present the fourth in the series, *The Place of Provenance: Regional Styles in Tibetan Painting*, and we find ourselves at the half-way point in a decade-long exploration.

For this keen look to the future and what the Rubin Museum could contribute to this little-known field, we must acknowledge the foresight of the museum's cofounder Donald Rubin. It was his brilliant idea to engage the eminent scholar/historian David Jackson to formulate the series and serve as its primary author. From the outset, annual grants from The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation made possible the full-time work of David Jackson, and we remain grateful for both the prescient idea and the resources that make its realization possible.

Recognizing both the scholarly and lasting significance of this undertaking, The Henry Luce Foundation became an early supporter of this endeavor. The foundation's staff and trustees, too, honor the museum with a critical

multiyear grant. Their partnership in this project and their continuing support are invaluable, and we are deeply indebted to them.

As rich as the Rubin Museum's collection is, the exhibitions in this series are immeasurably enriched by works of art important for their visual, narrative or comparative significance, and frequently both of these qualities are embodied in a single object. We are enormously grateful to the lenders to this exhibition, who entrust the museum with their works and who are listed here.

Museum curators Karl Debreczeny and Christian Luczanits have contributed to the books and guided David Jackson through the challenges of turning scholarly notions into public presentations. In this they have the continuing intelligent and creative assistance of numerous staff members, all of whom are listed at the end of this book.

The last six months have been a time of transition, as Donald Rubin retired from an active management role and I was appointed by the trustees as the museum's director. Such transitions are an expected part of any permanent institution, of course, and so it is with this one. As you will see in the forthcoming volumes and exhibitions in this series, our institutional commitment to important and groundbreaking scholarship is one that transcends changes in leadership. Happily, I expect a growing group of scholars, curators, and students will, for many decades, benefit from the work embodied in this project.

### LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

American Museum of Natural History,  
New York  
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford  
The Asian Art Museum, San Francisco  
Joachim Baader, Gallerie Für Tibetische  
Kunst, Munich, Germany  
Museum der Kulturen Basel  
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Shelley and Donald Rubin Private  
Collection, New York  
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore,  
Maryland  
Zimmerman Family Collection,  
New York

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## FOUNDER'S STATEMENT

### DONALD RUBIN, CO-FOUNDER RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

I KNOW MY FATHER was born in Grodno, Belarus, and my mother was born in Tbilisi, today's Georgian capital. But I know nothing of their lives there, or their families' lives. My father came to the States when he was seventeen years old, alone. My mother came just before the First World War, when she was three years old.

I often wonder who my other ancestors were. I have nothing more than pictures of them.

This is a common human phenomenon: many of us wonder who our ancestors were and what their lives were like. DNA analysis now allows people

to reach back through the centuries and learn something about their past. I believe this is part of the affection that people have for old things, be it a piece of furniture or a work of art; they help us connect to the places where our ancestors lived out their lives.

In this volume on regional styles in Tibetan art, the scholar David Jackson makes the case for establishing the "place of provenance" for Tibetan paintings, especially those created in recent centuries. Jackson deals with a huge question in Himalayan art: where did this piece come from? Using stylistic clues, Jackson is able to locate a

painting's place of origin, a remarkable achievement. The result of such efforts are immensely important—with the place of origin of a painting identified, so much more can be known about the piece, not to mention the monasteries, regions, and periods in which the objects emerged and the people whose hands created them.

And with this understanding the painting comes to life, its history brought into the present somehow.







AS DIRECTOR of exhibitions, collections, and research of the Rubin Museum of Art, I can only feel great admiration and respect for the depth and seriousness with which the eminent scholar David Jackson took up the tremendous task of creating a prestigious and unique series on the study Tibetan painting. Building on his groundbreaking publication *A History of Tibetan Painting* published in 1996, David Jackson takes a closer look at some crucial periods of Tibetan art and refines his argument about the development of diverse Tibetan painting styles as they are differentiated by Tibetan authors from the seventeenth century onward.

Following his two works on early Tibetan painting styles, differentiating Nepal derived painting styles from those that are more associated with India (*The Nepalese Legacy in Tibetan Painting*) and explaining the characteristics of early Tibetan portraiture in the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism (*Mirror of the Buddha*), this study concentrates on specific stylistic characteristics that pertain to certain geographic areas. Provenance in this context thus refers to the geographic origin or core area of a style. In chapter two of this catalog the author first gives a detailed description of the full extent of the Tibetan Buddhist cultural realm, including eastern, central, and western Himalayas, all of which were home to provincial styles. In successive chapters he elaborates in detail the traditional styles from Ü, Tsang, Kham, and Amdo. The western Tibetan (Ngari) styles of Kashmir, Guge, and

Ladakh complement the overview, along with the outlying Tibetan Buddhist countries Bhutan, Mongolia, and northern China, including Inner Mongolia. The pictorial components of this intricate geographical puzzle are filling in, bit by bit, the colorful mosaic of Tibetan painting.

Throughout his work David Jackson refers frequently to the Menri and New Menri styles. The term Menri refers to the painting style developed by the influential mid-fifteenth-century artist Menthangpa Menla Döndrup, the most important characteristic of which was the integration of a simplified continuous landscape as a background for the scenes and deities. Later painters built on this style and added their own stylistic features; outstanding among them was the mid-seventh-century Tsang painter Chöying Gyatso, who added remarkable emotional expressions to the figures that enliven the painting. His style was referred to as New Menri and it became the dominant artistic tendency especially in Tsang Province. Referring to these terms David Jackson makes clear that in the Tibetan conception styles such as Menri or New Menri not only change over time but they are also interlaced in the many provincial styles at least in the past three centuries. This leads more and more to the need of a clear-cut definition of the Menri, which Jackson plans to provide in the sixth book of this series—reason enough for scholars, true adepts, and enthusiasts of Tibetan art to follow the further evolution of this series.

In the meanwhile the present publication is an eye-opener, and here again David Jackson teaches us how to look at every detail in a *thangka* painting: inscriptions, iconographical elements, historical figures, lineages of great lamas, and donors may offer the first keys for the identification. But geographical details, monasteries, decorative backgrounds, specific use of color, the shape of clouds and mountains, and many other miniscule elements will lead to a place of provenance that puts the style and contents of the painting in evidence.

Once more, David Jackson is our guide to unveil the secrets of Tibetan painting.



LOST PROVENANCE bedevils efforts to study aspects of Tibetan art history. Many surviving portable works of Buddhist art were tragically separated from their monastic place of origin by periods of social upheaval such as occurred during the Great Cultural Revolution. How can we begin restoring to them their lost origins?

Until now the attributions of origins by most Western scholars—like attributions of local styles—have been perfunctory at best. When they ascribed a provenance to a *thangka* painting, they typically used broad terms such as “eastern regions” or “central regions,” which are not in harmony with the practice of scholars from Tibet.

One of the main ways for assigning provenance to a painting is to recognize its provincial style. In the last four centuries, the Menri style—founded by the artist Menthangpa in the mid-fifteenth century—dominated Tibetan painting. Artists working in the Menri style built upon the earlier Indic styles (Sharri and Beri) by adding Chinese-inspired landscapes in its backgrounds. The four later dominant provincial styles were each a local variant of the Menri. In this catalog I will exemplify for the first time paintings from the four main provincial styles of Tibet, introducing their correct traditional names and describing their homelands. (Here “provincial” means “belonging to a province”; thus central Tibet also has provincial styles.) Identifying the styles most closely associated with the five traditional provinces (Kham, Amdo, Ü, Tsang, and Ngari), I will also introduce a few paintings from

three outlying countries where Tibetan Buddhist art flourished—Bhutan, Mongolia, and Qing-dynasty China—each home to distinct local styles.

The five traditional “provinces” of Tibet include not only the two administrative provinces of central Tibet and other centrally administered areas (Ü and Tsang) but also vast areas of Tibetan Buddhist culture that were not directly administered yet were counted as belonging to the traditional eastern and western provinces of Amdo, Kham, and Ngari (including many Himalayan borderlands regions such as Ladakh, Zangskar, and Dolpo). Though the provincial and local styles are a crucial feature of Tibetan painting, they have until now been mostly overlooked by Western art historians. Yet it is essential to distinguish paintings of one province from the other, such as paintings of Ü Province in central Tibet from those from Tsang. Likewise, we must learn to recognize the main styles of Kham and Amdo Provinces, together with their minor styles. One of the main tasks of this exhibition and catalog will be to identify the four main provincial styles by comparing a few key stylistic elements of landscapes (skies, clouds, and snow mountains) and the ornamentation of deities’ heads (adornments like jewels and skulls). This catalog will also include a few paintings as recent as the twentieth century, since for some rare local styles the present may be the only point of departure for studying them.

I recall here with gratitude the kind help given to me by three Tibetan

*thangka* painters when I was a beginner many years ago: the late Wangdrak from Shekar, the late Legdrup Gyatsho of Nalendra in the Phenpo Valley of Ü, and Khangsur Dargye of Dar in Lhatse (now living in Kathmandu). They came from two different provinces (Ü and Tsang) and were very aware of the particular provincial or local style that they upheld.

For this catalog, noted expert Rob Linrothe kindly agreed to contribute an essay on a group of *thangkas* from Ngari Province in a rare and unexpected style. He took the time to read an early draft of this book, sharing many critical remarks and suggestions. Karl Debreczeny also carefully read this book in draft, giving many insightful criticisms, and helping me improve considerably the sections on Kham, Amdo, and China. He also supported the catalog by generously sharing in recent years many rare sources on Tibetan art, including important articles, journals, and books. Jöng Heimbrel kindly checked several references to Ngor abbots.

At the Rubin Museum of Art, Tracey Friedman’s help in writing to lenders and securing loans for the exhibition was invaluable. Helen Abbott guided this publication from start to finish with a steady and highly expert hand. The book was visually transformed by the design wizardry of Phil Kovacevich. They were skillfully assisted by Helen Chen, Gretchen Nadasky, and Samantha Wolner. It also benefitted from the careful and insightful editing of Annie Bien and Neil Liebman. Others who helped in

various ways, large and small, are listed on the last page of this book.

In this catalog I present a first overview of local styles in Tibetan painting, briefly touching on the art of all five provinces and three outlying countries. The eleven months between this exhibition and the preceding one left only a few months for research—not enough time to investigate its individual paintings in any detail. Still, I hope that this cursory sketch may be found useful by those seeking initial orientation within this essential but long-neglected field of Tibetan art history.

## NOTE TO THE READER

TO AVOID REDUNDANCIES in captions to figures, we may assume that all *thangkas* were painted with distemper on cotton and created in the Tibetan cultural region, unless otherwise specified. When the text refers to HAR (Himalayan Art Resources), the reader is invited to find more information about a work of art at [himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org), using the number given after HAR.

Some terms and names are given in transliterated Tibetan on the first occurrence in the text. These terms will also be found in the index. Diacritical marks are not provided for words of Sanskrit origin if they are familiar to English readers. In the main body of the text, Tibetan proper nouns are rendered phonetically, accompanied by Wylie Romanization on the first occurrence. When appropriate, names quoted from inscriptions or lists of names remain in transliteration. In endnotes, appendices, and footnotes, Tibetan names are Romanized. Some common Sanskrit terms or names with the character *ca* have been spelled as if it were aspirated, i.e., as *cha*: Vairocana = Vairochana



MAP 1: EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY  
HIMALAYAN ASIA







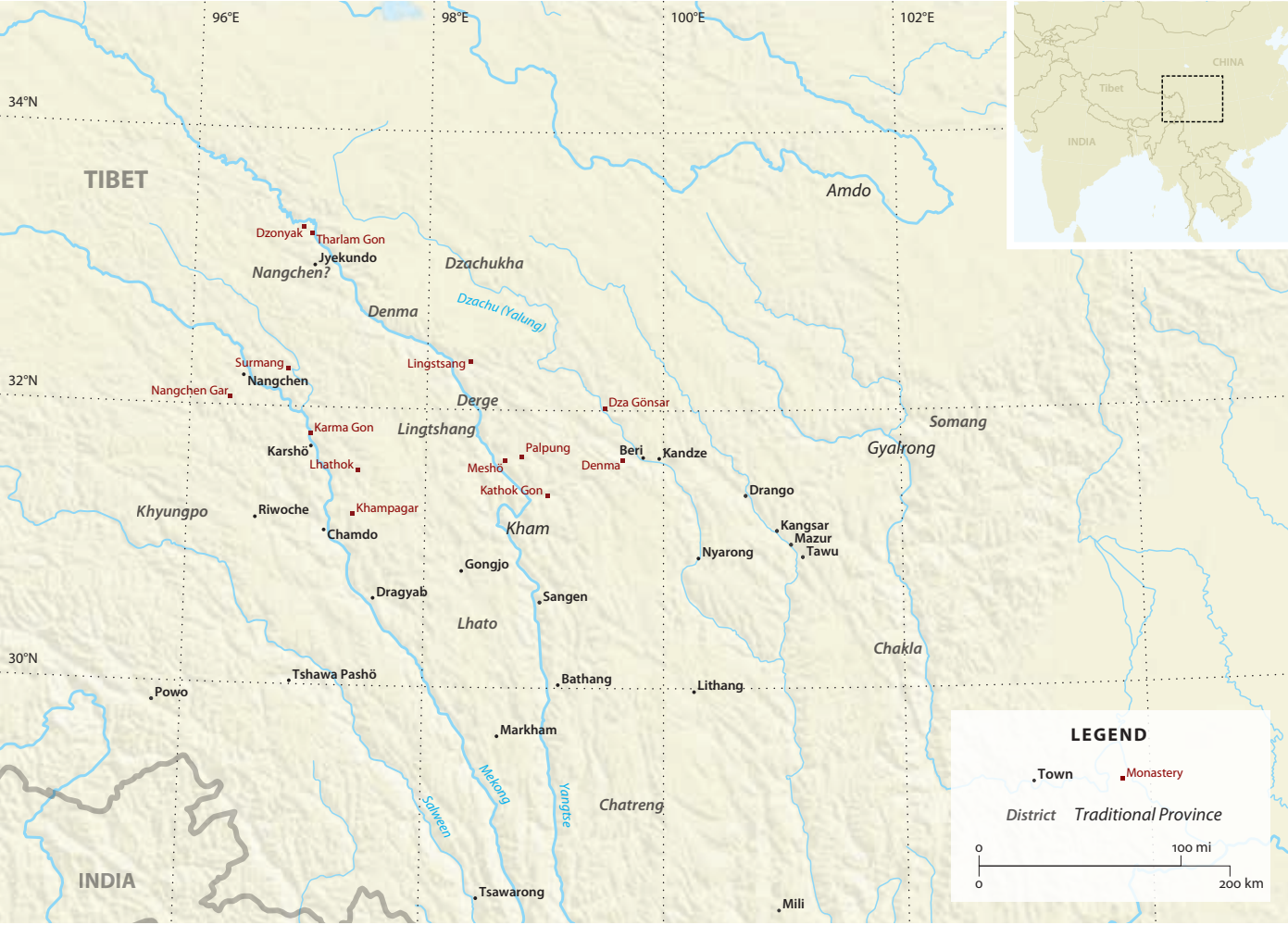


MAP II: Ü-TSANG PROVINCES



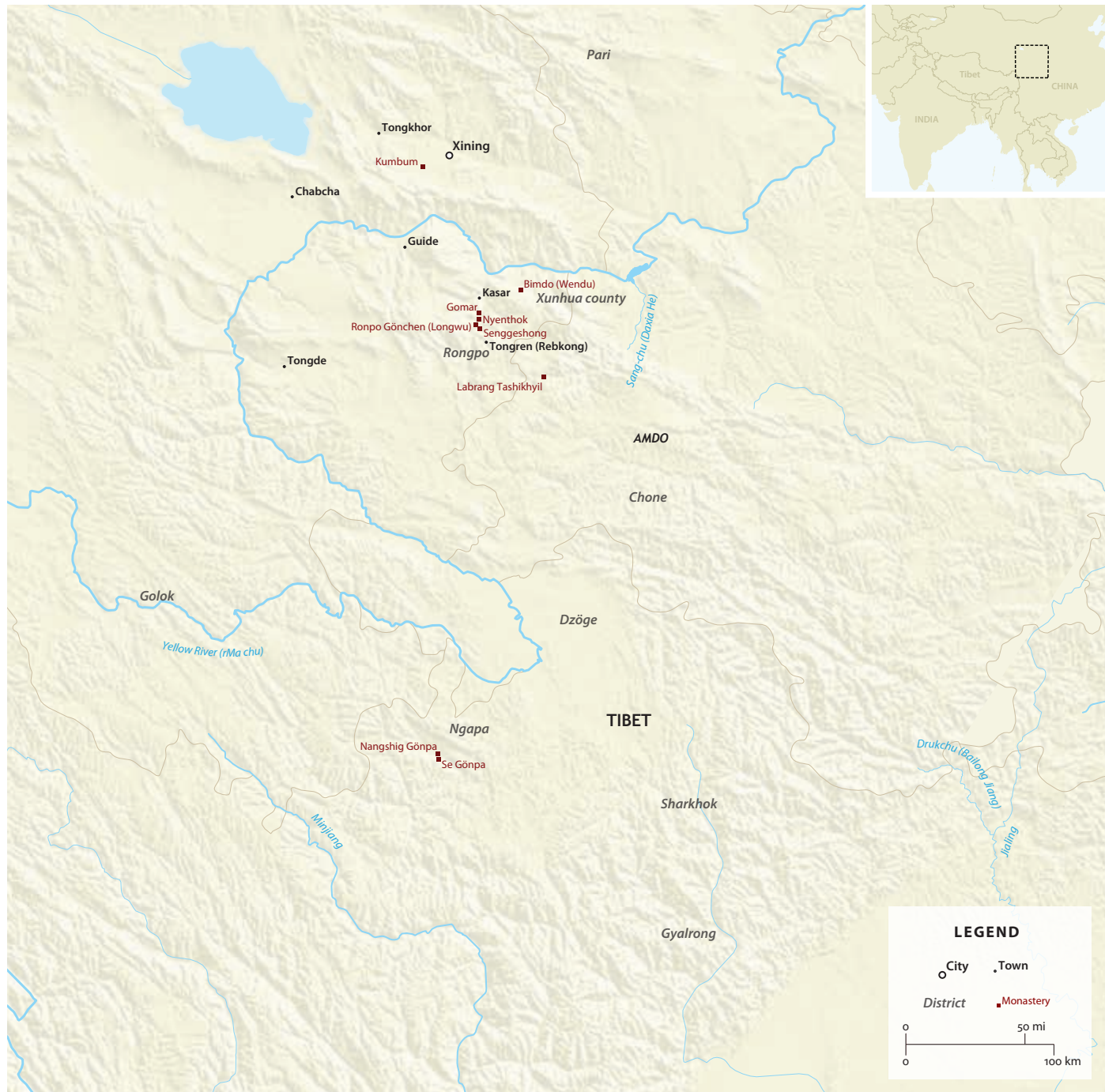


MAP III: KHAM PROVINCE





### MAP IV: AMDO PROVINCE





MAP V: NGARI PROVINCE









# Attributing Provenances to Tibetan Paintings

TO IDENTIFY THE STYLE of a Tibetan *thangka* painting is often difficult.<sup>1</sup>

Tibetan art history still finds itself in an elementary stage. History is cumulative; scholars have yet to gather accurate, detailed documentation for hundreds if not thousands of *thangkas* and wall paintings. Moreover, style cannot be studied in isolation. It can be fully appreciated only as part of a detailed investigation of paintings in their entire historical context including not just their place, but also their time, religious school, lineage of transmission, commissioning patron, and occasionally the artist.

Thus stylistic studies are unlikely to make much progress until Tibetan art history improves its methods and documents thoroughly many still undocumented works. Despite recent advances, historians of Tibetan painting struggle to establish such basic points as iconographical content, place of origin, age, religious affiliation, and painting school or style, especially when confronted by *thangkas* that were removed from their original monasteries and scattered throughout the world. At this stage, it is right to stay focused on those basics. In particular, reliable dating is an indispensable prerequisite for understanding the chronology and sequence of styles.

Another essential but until now relatively neglected aspect of documentation is provenance.<sup>2</sup> The origination of a *thangka* can be very difficult to ascertain. The following pages consider how provenance is a prerequisite for stylistic

studies and what can be done to make it more systematic and reliable.

## BASICS OF METHOD

To improve the documentation of provenance, art historians first need to bring their descriptions into harmony with Tibetan concepts—not only artistic but also religious, intellectual, cultural, and geographical. They also will need to work more thoroughly, taking into account every detail of historical evidence—particularly the written evidence in inscriptions—since they are already present on the works of art. These two points alone would improve future attributions of origins considerably.

Unlike dating and style, which have already inspired at least one special conference, nobody has begun to tackle systematically the problem of geographical attribution.<sup>3</sup> The generally weak basis for both dating and attributing origins in recent publications has been remarked upon by Christian Luczanits: “As also habitual in the field, reasons for attributing an object to a particular time and region are generally given in a vague way.”<sup>4</sup>

Not all provenances are difficult or problematic. For example, the question of geographical location is obvious for surviving wall paintings. But the subsidiary “where” questions relating to the people and traditions involved in the making of the murals still need to be asked. For portable works, “Where did this come from?” can be one of the most vexing questions a cataloger must pose,

especially for recent collections that include many scattered single paintings acquired with no system and minimal documentation. Some were stolen or unofficially exported. Those involved have not wanted to divulge the true origins, and if mentioned at all, it may even have been intended to mislead. When a painting finishes its journey from dealers to buyer and is seen in the destination country by connoisseurs or scholars, provenance becomes a key part of the painting’s lost heritage that urgently needs to be restored.

Under the right circumstances, it is not impossibly difficult to locate the origins of an individual *thangka* geographically. The method is similar to that used for locating paintings in time.<sup>5</sup> In both cases we must aim at identifying the historical people connected with the painting by analyzing the portraits, inscriptions, and lineages that it contains. Then, by establishing where the key people involved in the painting lived and died and with which monasteries and traditions they were most closely linked, we can draw conclusions about where the painting came from.

Who were the main people connected with a *thangka*? These may have included a planning lama, a commissioning lay or ordained patron, the painter or group of painters, a consecrating lama, a series of later owners, and every human being portrayed within the painting (whether as main figure or lineage guru). Rarely can all of them be identified for a single *thangka*. In many relatively modest paintings, no direct internal evidence is

Detail of Fig. 1.1



present. Their origins will only be located later through external evidence—by stylistic similarity with paintings whose provenance has already been established. Hence it is important to concentrate now on those *thangkas* that possess ample internal evidence relating to traceable people and to identify their provenances correctly. As far as possible, we should study paintings in situ.

## FUNDAMENTAL AIMS

For paintings not surviving in situ, we can establish their provenance first of all by examining internal inscriptions and iconographical evidence about the main human figures portrayed, the identity of the teachers in the lineage—especially the last teacher—along with that of the patron and consecrating lama. Secondly, those identifiable people can help locate a relevant monastery, a specific lineage (linked with certain main and branch monasteries), and a school with its known main monastic seats—all these can yield geographical information of varying certitude and exactitude.

The artistic school or style may also be important. A recognizable provincial or local school can suggest geographical conclusions. Provincial schools or local styles can normally be identified through decorative background elements, such as the clouds and skies. They are the subject of the following chapters of this catalog.

## THE GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE OF BUDDHIST TEACHERS

If the *thangka* cannot be examined directly we can begin to document it competently only if decent photographs of the entire *thangka* are available. Photographs are needed of both front and back if inscriptions exist on the back of the painting or mount. Nowadays that means making large digital files that can be easily rechecked and stored.

Suppose we can identify the central figure in a lama portrait either directly or from good photographs and wish to establish the origins of the *thangka*. The first step would be to learn about that main figure, especially the geographical circumstances of his life. It is useful to distinguish lamas of local general historical importance from those of province-wide importance. A still higher level of importance would be possessed by masters who were renowned and active in several or all provinces (of national importance) or even in an adjoining country (of international importance). Generally speaking, the smaller the person's historical impact, the narrower the geographical range of the traces he would have left behind. Depictions of great founders such as Padmasambhava, Milarepa (Mi la ras pa, 1012–1097), or Tsongkhapa (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa, 1357–1419), can be found all over Tibet, and thus their portraits have little specifically geographical significance, though they are extremely useful for wider comparisons.

Ironically, the smaller the historical impact and geographical range a master had, the more specific geographically (and hence significant) he and his portrait will be for establishing provenances. The obvious conclusion: we should try to document as many portraits of minor local lamas as possible. The difficulty comes when we try to locate the corresponding written sources. They are only sporadically available for these lesser known figures. Here local expertise and scholars who have studied the history of that area may be indispensable.

## AN UNUSUAL “LOCAL LAMA” OF MUSTANG

Let us consider two paintings that originated from Tibetan Himalayan borderland areas and once belonged to a prominent private collection in

Switzerland before being dispersed at auction.<sup>6</sup> The first, Figure 1.1, depicts an obscure local lama of Lo Mustang in present-day northwestern Nepal.

Inscriptions on the *thangka* name him as Tsuggyen Norbu (gTsug rgyan nor bu), a rare name that could be linked only with the pious king from Mustang of the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Based on his name, the provenance can be identified as Mustang. I have mentioned Tsuggyen Norbu in my book *Mollas of Mustang*, though the text of the historical oration (*molla*) of Tsarang Monastery unfortunately breaks off precisely in the passage that tells his story.<sup>8</sup> I gleaned a few more details about him in an unpublished genealogical history of the Lo rulers (*Glo bo gdung rabs*).<sup>9</sup>

According to that history, Tsuggyen Norbu was deeply devoted to Kagyu (bKa' brgyud) and Nyingma (rNying ma) traditions. His main Kagyu teacher was Taktsewa Kukye (rTag rtse ba sKu skye), from whom he received the key profound teachings of the *Great Seal* (*Phyag rgya chen po*) and *Six Teachings of Nāropa* (*Nā ro chos drug*). His main Nyingma guru was Ngadak Ngawang Chögyal (mNga' bdag mNga' dbang chos rgyal), who bestowed many transmissions. From the Dolpo lama Ngawang Döndrup (Ngag dbang don 'grub) he received the *Black Wrathful One Teachings of Majig* (*Ma cig*). He taught and engaged in Sakya, Kagyu, and Nyingma practices as a nonsectarian teacher and also wrote a few religious

---

FIG. 1.1  
Tsuggyen Norbu, Yogi-King of Mustang  
Lo Mustang, Nepal; early 18th century  
23 x 18 in. (58.5 x 46.0 cm)  
Private Collection  
Photograph Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. ©  
2006  
Literature: H. Kreijger 2001, no. 17; D.  
Jackson 2006, fig. 4; and Sotheby's New  
York, *The Jucker Collection of Himalayan  
Paintings*, March 28, 2006.







texts. He taught a small circle of acolytes in Lo, where he founded Ngönga Monastery (mNgon dga' chos sde), from where this painting may have come.

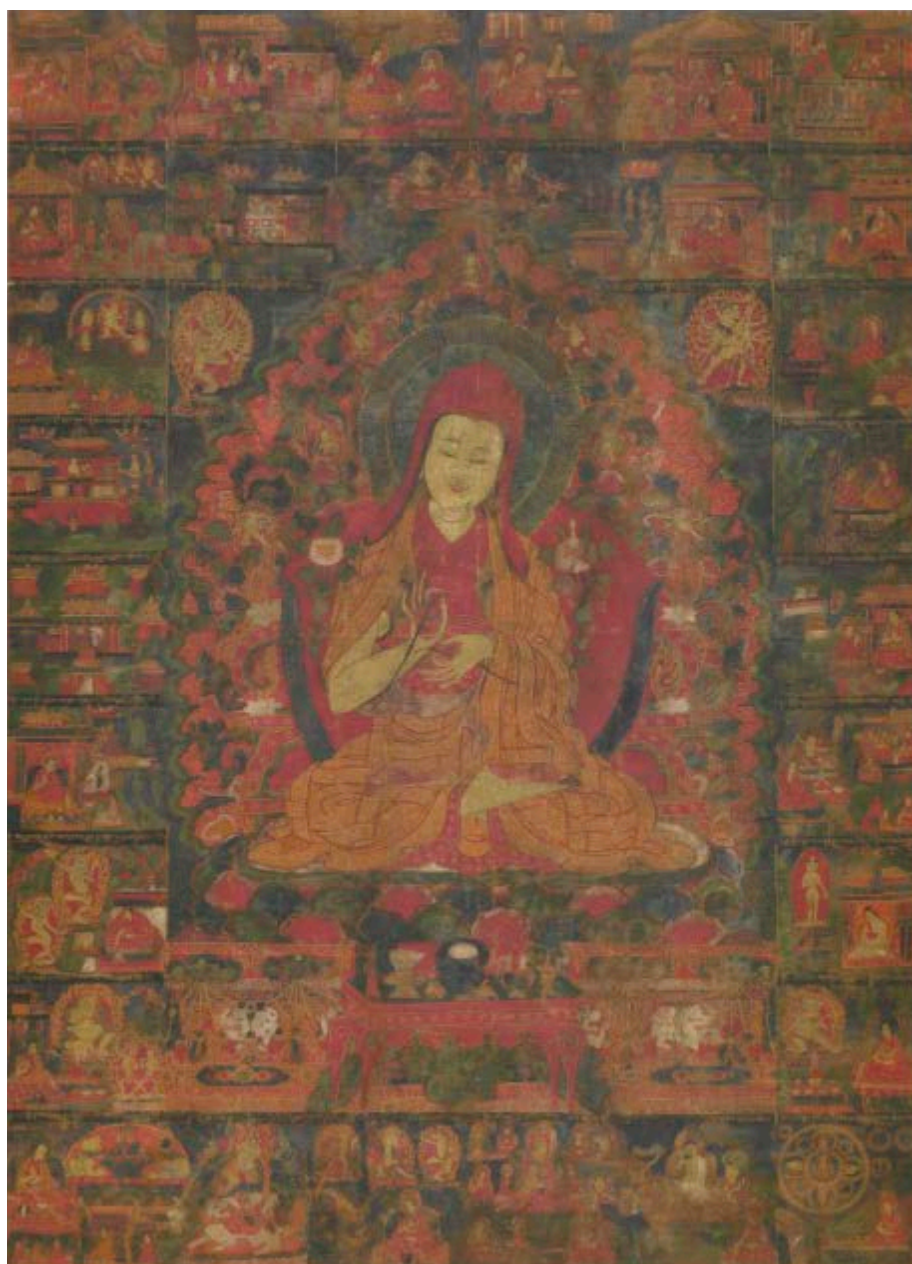
King Tsuggyen Norbu was once captured by the soldiers of Jumla and imprisoned in the Kak (sKag) fortress in the Kali Gandaki Valley south of Mustang. His son, the Lo ruler Tashi Namgyal (bKra shis rnam rgyal), organized his rescue with the help of an eminent Ladakhi general. Thanks to his unusual name, I found his family history and could specify the origin of the painting and place its religious context.

### A DOLPO LAMA'S PORTRAIT COMES TO THE WEST

Figure 1.2 shows a local lama, Sönam Lotrö (bSod nams Blo gros, 1516–1581) of Dolpo (Dol po), a district in the Nepal Himalayas, who unexpectedly appeared in Western collections. David Snellgrove translated his life story fifty years ago in “*Four Lamas of Dolpo*.” He studied in Dolpo the depictions of the lama’s life in paintings. Snellgrove called Sönam Lotrö “Merit Intellect,” correcting the dating of his life in his revised edition.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 1.3 is a much more recently painted *thangka*, also from Dolpo. If we examine it closely, we see that this is the same lama as in Figure 1.2. How did this happen? In 1961 while visiting Dolpo, David Snellgrove had the local scholar-painter Dechen Labrang Lama (bDe chen Bla brang Bla ma) copy an older *thangka* on the biography of Sönam Lotrö. Figure 1.2—which was until recently part of the Jucker collection in Switzerland—may have served as the original of the copy for Snellgrove. If not, then there must have existed in Dolpo another presumably late-sixteenth-century copy of the original.

In 1989 Snellgrove donated all four modern copies of the Dolpo lama paintings to the British Museum.<sup>11</sup> This



copy of Figure 1.2 might be useful for verifying the contents of the inscriptions under each episode. It allows us to confirm the historical contents and origin of both paintings.

### WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

Most single paintings of minor local Tibetan Buddhist masters were probably commissioned by their disciples toward the end of their lives, or in the first few decades following their deaths. The presence of a few detailed inscriptions at the bottom of a painting can suddenly

FIG. 1.2  
The Dolpo Lama Sönam Lotrö  
Dolpo, northwestern Nepal; late 16th century  
26  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 19  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (67 x 49 cm)  
Private Collection  
Photograph Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc.  
© 2006  
Literature: H. Kreijger 2001, No. 23; D. Jackson 2006, fig. 5; and Sotheby's New York, *The Jucker Collection of Himalayan Paintings*, March 28, 2006.





FIG. 1.3  
The Dolpo Lama Sönam Lotrö  
Dolpo, Northwestern Nepal; 1961  
40 ½ x 31 ½ in. (103 x 80 cm)  
The British Museum  
© The Trustees of the British Museum  
Literature: D. Snellgrove 1967, pl. 39; and  
D. Jackson 2006, fig. 6.

transform such guesswork into a matter of clear historical record.

When studying a portrait of a guru, we should distinguish single paintings from a series portraying a lineage. If the painting is part of a set, we should try to identify the latest guru, usually assumed to be the teacher of the commissioning patron.

Single portraits of minor historical figures will usually have been commissioned by their disciples. A local lama's students probably remained within the same place or province. But in each case we must learn as much as possible about the master's movements. Some traveled widely in their younger years

but settled down as mature masters. For example, the Ladakhi lama Ridzong Setrül Tshultrim Chöpel (Ri rdzong Sras sprul Blo bzang tshul khriṃs chos 'phel, 1864–1927) went to central Tibet and Tshawā Pashö (Tsha ba dPa' shod) in southwestern Kham before returning to Ladakh. (See more about him in chapter 7, Figs. 7.18 through 7.21)

Lesser lamas would not be expected to leave portraits behind except where they lived or had devoted disciples. Some lamas traveled widely as pilgrims or diplomats, as did Kathok Rigdzin Tshewang Norbu (Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu, 1698–1755) and Kathok Situ Chökyi Gyatsho (Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho, 1880–1925). Both Nyingma lamas came from the same monastery in the Derge kingdom of Kham. Short-term visitors would not be expected to have left portraits behind, except perhaps the very greatest lamas like the Karmapas, Dalai Lamas, or Panchen Lamas. Some lamas possessed a main monastic seat and strong ties with the borderlands. Situ Panchen (Si tu Paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, 1700–1774) founded temples and taught many disciples in Lijiang, Yunnan Province.<sup>12</sup> (See below, Fig. 5.1.)

If the person portrayed was the founder of a tradition, we need to locate his main monastic seat (or seats). Then we should ask the following questions. Where were its main branches? Where and when did his school flourish? Are early portraits mentioned in subsequent histories? Are they described in other detailed written sources? Do later copies of these famous portraits survive? These subsidiary questions can be answered in regard to prominent lamas from well-documented traditions. We should thus devote attention to paintings of the most famous founding masters.

Suppose the main figure (or last figure of the lineage) in the *thangka* was abbot of a certain monastery. We might think his portrait was geographically



linked with the monastery he led, in the absence of evidence to the contrary. But before making this assumption, we should learn more details about his life, since a few outstanding masters, such as Mūchen Sanggye Rinchen (Mus chen Sangs rgyas Rin chen, 1453–1524), the abbot of both Ngor and Nalendra, were simultaneously or sequentially abbots of two or three widely removed monasteries. Did he live and die at that monastery? Did he found other establishments? Did he travel or live for long periods elsewhere? Did he retain close relations with his birth place? Did he have numerous disciples elsewhere? Unless we inform ourselves about the abbot's career by studying his life story, we cannot begin to answer these questions.

If we concentrate on one school or lineage, we can also better answer further questions: Are similar scroll paintings from the same monastery or lineage known to survive? Sakya, Ngor, Palpung, Riwoche, and Tashilhunpo are five prominent monasteries that have preserved enough material for this type of restricted but focused approach.

Rarely is a location actually mentioned on a *thangka*, though there are exceptions. I have seen labels on the brocade mounts identifying a regional dormitory (*kham tshan*), as in a nineteenth-century painting of Drillbupa, one of Situ's eight great adepts, which says, *se ra te h[or kham] tsha[n]*, "Trehor regional dormitory of Sera."<sup>13</sup>

Paintings based on xylographs are a special case. We may know the location of a set of xylograph blocks that served as models for a group of paintings (such as the Narthang or Derge printeries). But for popular and widely distributed xylographs—such as the Derge Twelve Deeds of the Buddha or the Narthang Avadāna moral tales—this does not help establish where subsequent paintings based on them were painted or kept.

For instance, Figure 1.4 displays the Eri style of Ü Province and purely

on stylistic grounds was very unlikely to have been painted in Derge. (That style will be described in chapter 3.) We can say its provenance is Lhasa, central Tibet, presently in Norbu Lingka Palace.

The difficulties in identifying provenance are similar in some ways to those of dating. Both aim to identify the concrete historical context of an object in as much detail as possible. The historical context consists of people who lived in a certain place and time. Detailed knowledge about the original context of a *thangka* improves our understanding of provenance.

As with dating, it is not realistic to expect that many people will suddenly have the skills needed to read inscriptions or interpret historical sources written in Tibetan. Yet why not be aware of the basic requirements for attributing provenance reliably and begin to make the minimal essential improvements, even if this means temporarily collaborating with scholars or those Tibetans best informed about a particular tradition and its historical writings?

#### LIKE INTERPRETING AN OLD PHOTO

Let us take a parallel case from genealogy. Suppose a distant cousin has sent us a photo of a faded daguerreotype found in her late great-grandmother's attic. The man portrayed wears a military uniform. We remember having heard as children that one of our ancestors fought at the Battle of Waterloo and have an intuition that this man may have been he. That supposition will remain unfounded "received tradition" unless we can convincingly link a name, dates, and places to the grizzled face staring back from the old picture.

From his uniform and other details, certain clues of an almost iconographical nature can be extracted from the picture regarding time of service, military branch, rank, and decorations. With

determined effort, one can restore the man's identity through the almost obsessive record keeping of many governments with regard to military service.

Similarly, the study of Tibetan *thangka* paintings is to restore the lost identities of the teachers and patrons portrayed, sometimes through relatively clear identifying inscriptions and sometimes through much more cryptic clues of iconography. When we investigate a richly inscribed painting with a complete lineage from a well-known tradition, the problems of provenance and dating may solve themselves. Fortunately, the Buddhists of Tibet were also almost obsessive record keepers. They have left a rich body of historical records about the gurus portrayed, and those records can be found if the researcher possesses diligence, a little intuition, or a bit of luck. The researcher's luck, in particular, will increase astoundingly if he or she begins by working systematically on groups of *thangkas* that possess detailed lineages and inscriptions, preferably from the same religious school.

#### SUBSIDIARY "WHERE?" QUESTIONS

If pursued in detail, tracing the origins of a painting can lead to related "Where?" questions. In addition to the expected "Where did the painting come from?" it might be useful to ask where it was painted, where its painters came from, and where their painting tradition originated. Also, where was the painting planned and commissioned? If copied, where did the original come from? Where was it first consecrated and enshrined? Where was it later moved? Where did any later consecrations take place? Where did it turn up in recent times? Where is it now and under what circumstances did it reach there? These questions become more relevant the more we know about the background of a painting; they need to be considered for many great masterpieces.



FIG. 1.4  
 Śākyamuni's Birth at Lumbini (Painting  
 based on Derge Block Print)  
 Lhasa, central Tibet; early 20th century  
 55 1/8 x 35 3/8 in. (140 x 90 cm)  
 Kept in the Norbu Lingka, Lhasa  
 (HAR 99030)  
 Literature: Rig 'dzin rdo rje et al. 1985,  
*Bod kyi thang ka*, pl. 30.

#### THE TAKLUNG/RIWOCHÉ CORPUS

An interesting example of later consecrations and possible dual provenance is the corpus of *thangkas* from Taklung (sTag lung) and Riwoche (Ri bo che) Monasteries. Initially, Western art historians assumed the entire group to be from Taklung Monastery in northern

Ü Province. But the more complicated origin of these *thangkas* become clear as soon as we read the inscriptions and analyze a few of the lineages, which continue down to Sanggye Önpö (Sangs rgyas dBon po, 1251–1296) and later. Many bear inscriptions recording their consecration by him.

The oldest among the paintings were commissioned at Taklung and later brought in the 1270s by Sanggye Önpö to western Kham and then kept at Riwoche during subsequent centuries. From the 1270s or 1280s onward a large number of paintings were added to the collection. These *thangkas* were painted at Riwoche or elsewhere in Kham. The older paintings have a dual (Taklung-Riwoche) provenance and the recent ones a single Riwoche provenance.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 1.5 was presumably brought to Riwoche by Sanggye Önpö and exemplifies the dual provenance of Taklung-Riwoche. Its original provenance can be said to be Taklung Monastery, Ü Province.

Figure 1.6 is a later copy of the Taklung founder. According to the verso inscriptions, it must have been painted at Riwoche in the time of Sanggye Önpö or thereafter. Its provenance can thus be given as Riwoche Monastery, Kham Province. (I have described this and several closely related paintings in my *Mirror of the Buddha* catalog.)<sup>15</sup>

#### A DUBIOUS TAKLUNG ATTRIBUTION

The first person to attribute a certain provenance to a painting bears a high responsibility. That attribution can influence the later assessment of the piece inordinately. Figure 1.7 is a single *thangka* from a series of Kagyu lineage masters. Based on the reading of one from dozens of inscriptions, the first person to publish it wrongly attributed the provenance to Taklung and the Phenyül district of Ü Province during





FIG. 1.5  
 Painting of Taklung and Riwoche  
 Taklungthangpa with Footprints, Lineage,  
 and Manifestations  
 Taklung, Ü Province, Tibet; ca. 1200  
 20 ½ x 13 in. (52 x 34 cm)  
 Musée des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, Paris,  
 France  
 Lionel Fournier donation (MA 5176)  
 Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art  
 Resource, NY  
 Photograph by Gérard Blot  
 ART418890  
 Literature: J. Casey Singer 1995, pl. 36; G.  
 Béguin 1990, p. 20, pl. 2; G. Béguin 1995,  
 cat. no. 143; K. Selig Brown 2004, fig. 17;  
 and D. Jackson 2011, fig. 4.2.



FIG. 1.6  
 Taklungthangpa Chenpo with his Lineage  
 and Manifestations  
 Riwoche, Kham Province, Tibet; early or  
 mid-14th century  
 19 ⅝ x 15 in. (49.9 x 38.1 cm)  
 Brooklyn Museum of Art, Gift of the Asian  
 Art Council (BMA 1991.86)  
 (HAR 86901)  
 Literature: D. Jackson 2011, fig. 5.17.





FIG. 1.7  
Lama of a Drukpa Kagyü Lineage  
Tibet; ca. mid- or late 16th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Private collection  
Literature: D.-I. Lauf 1976, p. 116, pl. 37;  
and D. Jackson 2006, fig. 3.

the eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup> In reality, the set portrays a lineage of the Drukpa Kagyu and dates probably to the second half of the sixteenth century. Which Drukpa lineage does it portray and where does it come from? To determine that and to date it more accurately, we need to document the entire set, particularly the final *thangka*.



## DEPICTIONS OF PLACES IN PAINTINGS

Another aspect of “place” in paintings is the specific locations we sometimes find depicted. Monasteries, buildings, tents, or other settings are often shown in the backgrounds of lama portraits or biographical narratives. For example, Figure 1.8 depicts an episode from the life of the Ngor abbot Rinchen Migyur Gyaltsen (b. 1717), one of several episodes depicted in the whole *thangka*. The scene depicts a monastery in which that abbot’s older contemporary Shuchen Tshultrim Rinchen (Zhu chen Tshul khrim rin chen, 1697–1774) of Denma (lDan ma) is starting the work of supervising a team of painters led by Lhaga and his brother, his two usual collaborators. The entire painting contains several extensive captions written in gold, one near each episode. The ones under this

FIG. 1.8, detail, also Fig. 5.22  
Episode from the Life of the Ngor Abbot  
Rinchen Migyur Gyaltsen  
Kham Province, Tibet; late 18th century  
31 1/8 x 23 in. (79 x 58.5 cm)  
Collection R.R.E.  
Literature: D. Jackson 1996, pl. 63.



FIG. 1.9, also Fig. 4.12  
 Tsongkhapa (according to Khedrup's Five Visions)  
 Tashilhunpo, Tsang Province, Tibet; 18th century  
 Dimensions unknown  
 Private Collection  
 (HAR 69912)

scene and the one to its left mention only the depicted people and what they were doing.<sup>17</sup> The terse yet elegant verses make me suspect the involvement of the great literati Shuchen in the composition of these captions, which I plan to confirm in the future.<sup>18</sup> (See also Figure 5.21, the full painting of Figure 1.8, which I discuss in connection with the “Derge style.”)

When properly read, the other captions of the painting might yield the names of the main places depicted. To identify the monastery and the locale in Kham where that Ngor abbot and his disciples worked, another strategy is to find the corresponding episode from the life stories of one or both lamas. I located a promising episode from Shuchen's autobiography indicating where they might have worked, namely at Yilhung (Yid lhung) Monastery in 1764.<sup>19</sup>

The main subject of Figure 1.9 is Lama Tsongkhapa according to Khedrup's Five Visions (*gzigs pa lnga ldan*). The standard composition is augmented by the presence of Tashilhunpo Monastery in the landscape. This detail links the painting to its likely origin, Tashilhunpo Monastery in Tsang Province.<sup>20</sup>

Figure 1.10 depicts Drepung Monastery; to the far right of the top register sits the Seventh Dalai Lama (1708–1757). The flat blue sky and clouds with various pale pastel base colors preclude a provenance of Drepung Monastery, central Tibet. The painting seems to come from one of the distant Tibetan Buddhist areas in the far northeast—such as Amdo or beyond.<sup>21</sup>

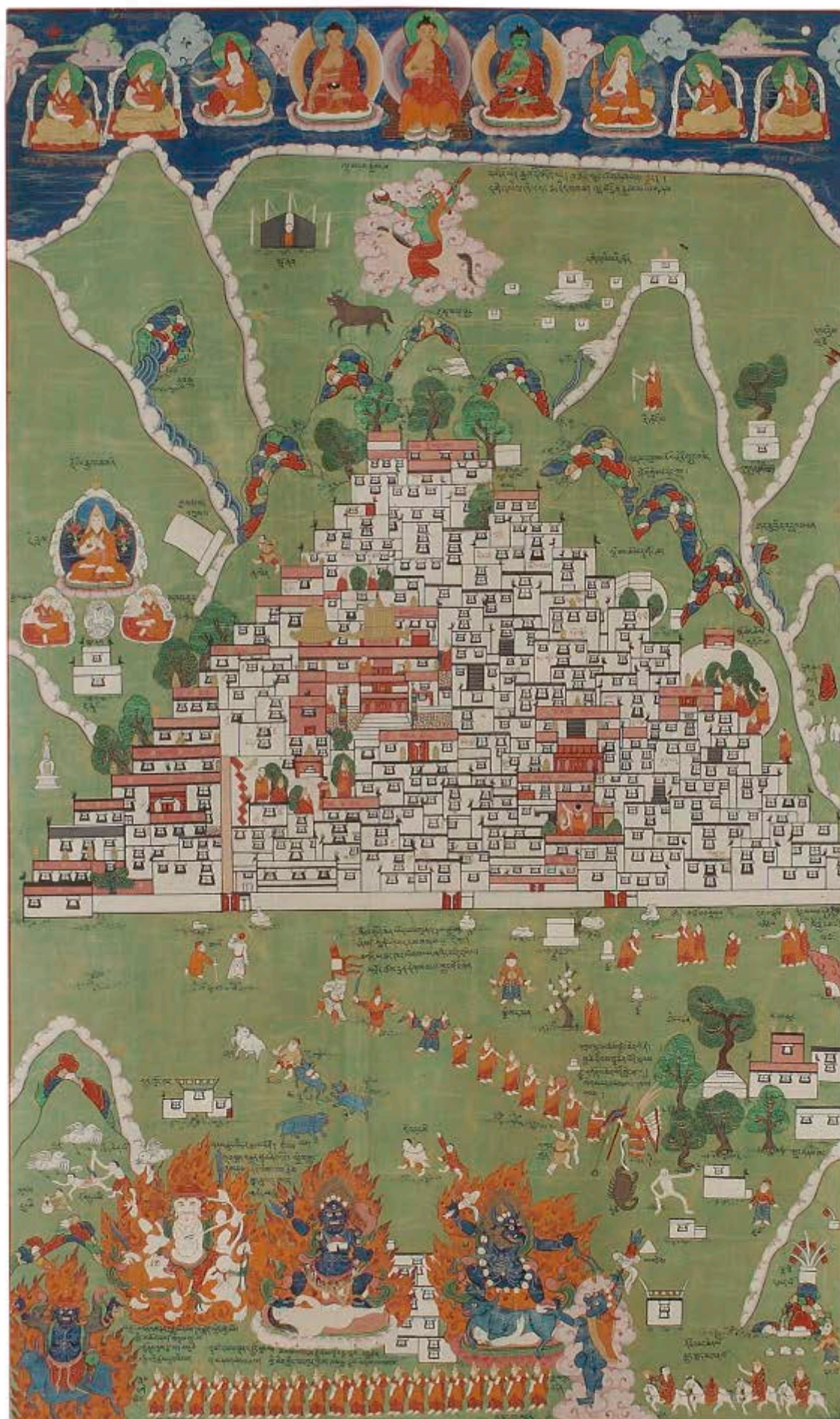


#### PROVINCIAL STYLES: A CLUE OF LAST RESORT

If neither iconography nor inscription allows us to identify a single historical person either portrayed within the *thangka* or mentioned in connection with its creation, then the main remaining option is to provisionally estimate its regional or provincial origin from its workmanship and decorative details. Many recent styles were linked with provinces. Modern Tibetan painters and experts classify paintings according to traditional provincial or local styles including the Tsangri style (Gtsang

FIG. 1.10 (opposite page)  
 Depiction of Drepung Monastery  
 Second half of 18th century  
 45 ¼ x 26 ¾ in. (115 x 68 cm)  
 Brussels, Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire  
 (Verb. 20/Ver. 350)  
 Literature: M. Henss 1981, fig. 69.







bris),<sup>22</sup> Eri style (E bris), and Drigung style ('Bri bris). But for such labels to be useful for scholars, they need to be condensed to a few stylistic principles that can be verified in a few well-established cases. I will do this in the following chapters.

Such attributions of provenance are often provisional hypotheses of last resort, but they can be fairly reliable, providing we know that particular local style well. We should also not forget that in addition to the most common styles in a given province (e.g., Üri style, Tsangri style, Khamri style), other minor or local styles also existed with them.

One would expect there to be an inverse relation between geographic extent and conclusiveness as with “local Buddhist masters,” with “local painting schools,” or “provincial styles.” Similarly, the more popular and widespread a style, the less significant it would be for establishing provenance. A style that had spread almost universally would have no force at all for drawing geographical conclusions (though few painting styles became anything like “universal” in Tibet in recent centuries).<sup>23</sup> Thus, the smaller traditions specific to one particular district, monastery, or family of artists would possess much greater geographical conclusiveness. The implication: If we want to become more conclusive and accurate about provenances, we must document smaller and geographically more specific painting traditions!

This truth is complicated by a further geographical and historical reality: Some of the smaller traditions were not specific to a particular place, but rather to a specific religious school—for example, the Drigung Kagyu were small in recent centuries compared with the dominant Geluk School. Still they possessed numerous branch monasteries in distant locations like Guge and Ladakh in Ngari and Nangchen and Gapa (sGa pa) in Kham.

## THE GOAL: TO SPECIFY THE PROVINCE OR LOCALE

Most previous Western catalogs of Tibetan art, when specifying the origin of a painting, used such broad terms as “central regions” or “eastern regions of Tibet.” These are too vague to be useful for historians from inside or outside Tibet. Future attributions should employ, if possible, the relevant indigenous geographical categories, beginning with the five traditional provinces of Tibet: Western Tibet, or Ngari (mNga' ris), Tsang (gTsang), Ü (dBus), Kham (Khams) and Amdo (A mdo). Each of these five provinces encompasses huge areas; therefore it would help to specify which part of the province (northeast or far west), or the specific district or county (*rdzong*) within the province (Ladakh, Gyantse, or Derge). If we do not have a fairly good idea which province a painting came from, let us admit that and refrain from specifying its origin.

## GEOGRAPHIC SKILLS AND TOOLS

Knowledge of Tibetan geography is necessary for adequately attributing provenances. “Tsang Province,” for example, would certainly be a huge improvement over “central regions, Tibet.” Even better would be to specify a particular district within Tsang, such as Dingri, Jonang, Gyantse, or Shigatse, each of which conjures up specific connotations in the mind of a historian. Even better would be to name a specific monastery in one of those places.

To locate monasteries and other sites, we should make use of available guidebooks and maps. There existed several traditional Tibetan geographies and records of pilgrim's travels; two have been translated and published by Ferrari and Wylie.<sup>24</sup> Another relevant source is traditional guides to sacred places.<sup>25</sup>

Other valuable sources, not just for modern travelers to Tibet but also

for art historians, are detailed traveler's handbooks, the most comprehensive being the *Tibet Handbook with Bhutan* by Gyurme Dorje (2004, first edition 1996). See also *The Tibet Guide* by S. Batchelor (1987) and *Tibet* by K.H. Everding (1993 and second edition, 2001, both in German). For the two eastern provinces of Kham and Amdo, Andreas Gruschke has published four volumes of geographic documentation: *The Cultural Monuments of Tibet's Outer Provinces: Amdo* and *The Cultural Monuments of Tibet's Outer Provinces: Kham*.<sup>26</sup> There also exists a fairly comprehensive pilgrimage and hiking guide to much of central and western Tibet, *Tibet Handbook: A Pilgrimage Guide*, by Victor Chan, with a matching set of detailed maps.<sup>27</sup>

We should also try to locate each place with available maps. Recent maps include the map published by the Amnye Machen Institute: Tibetan and Adjacent Areas under Communist China's Occupation 1: 3,200,000 (Dharamsala: Amnye Machen Institute, 2001) and the Rikon map *Ethnisch-Kulturhistorische Karte* (Rikon, Switzerland: Rikon Institute). There also exists a reprint of an official classified map of Tibet in Tibetan script that was republished in England (London: Tibet Information Network, 1981). In 1995 Gregor Verhufen privately published a place-name index to that detailed map. See also the Tibet Map Institute, [www.tibetmap.com/](http://www.tibetmap.com/), Atlas of the Tibet Autonomous Region with its comprehensive list. Finally, if you know the approximate location of a place, you can use Google earth—but be aware that names maybe have possible Chinese adaptations or pronunciations.

## PIGMENTS AND MOUNTING

Other possible clues about provenance may come from the pigments, materials, and style of the cotton ground or brocade mounting. Note especially the blue and green pigments—in central





FIG. 1.11  
A Partial Pantheon  
Northern China, Qing-dynasty Tibetan  
Buddhist art; 18th century  
32 x 21 ¼ in. (81.5 x 54 cm)  
Private Collection  
After: H. Kreijger, 2001, no. 67; and D.  
Jackson 2006, fig. 8a.

Tibet they were usually the azurite and malachite pigments of Nyemo in Tsang. The greater the distance from Lhasa, the rarer and costlier those pigments became. The white pigments also should have chemical analysis, if possible.

In Figure 1.11, the provenance was suggested by the painting's unusual pigments or palette. It shows a partial Geluk pantheon of eighty-one deities, not a common iconographic subject. Judging from the published catalog

plates, the colors (the dull green in particular) are similar to those in the two *thangkas* identified as Manchu Sino-Tibetan art.<sup>28</sup> It is certainly not central Tibetan art (from Ü Province or Lhasa) of the eighteenth century (lacking as it does the typical Ü-style features that we shall examine in chapter 3). Nor is its last lama figure (top row, right), who is called just “Precious Guru” (Bla ma Rin po che), to be identified as the Sixth Dalai Lama.<sup>29</sup>

Without being able to examine the original, I would suggest Jangkya Rolpe Dorje (lCang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje, 1717–1786) or a similar contemporary Manchu-court lama of the eighteenth century as a more likely iconographic candidate than the “Bla ma Rin po che” mentioned above. Compare, Figure 1.12, said to be a portrait of Jangkya Rolpe Dorje. The Manchu court or a Tibetan



FIG. 1.12  
Jangkya Rolpe Dorje  
China; 18th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Städtisches Museum für Völkerkunde  
München  
After: C. C. Müller and W. Raunig, eds.  
1982, p. 304; and D. Jackson 2006, fig. 9.

Buddhist temple in northern China or Inner Mongolia could be suggested as a more fitting provenance for Figure 1.11, based on the palette and style. (*Thangkas* from those outlying regions will be discussed in chapter 8.) Other paintings of the Third Jangkya with his previous rebirths are known.<sup>30</sup>

The brocade mountings of each painting should also be researched carefully, especially along the top of the back side for notations that specify



the name for a monastery or regional dormitory. Similar shorthand markings may be found on the mount (or at the bottom of the painting) that have essential details for identifying the main subject and the placement within its set. The original mountings should not be removed or discarded however old and tattered they look.

#### AVOIDABLE OVERSIMPLIFICATIONS

Not every mural in a province should be automatically identified as being painted in the dominant style of that province. We know that outstanding painters from Tsang were invited to participate in major projects in Ü Province (from the seventeenth through twentieth century), including the murals of the Potala and Jokhang temples!

Another common oversimplification is to assume that all paintings with their main figures situated in green background landscapes show more Chinese influence, and hence are “eastern Tibetan”—i.e., from Kham or Amdo, the two provinces closest to China. Most paintings throughout Tibet portrayed such predominantly blue and green landscape backgrounds, at least after the Menthangpa- and Khyentse- led stylistic revolution that began in the mid-fifteenth century. In recent centuries, most of the more expansive Chinese-looking backgrounds were painted in Kham in primarily the Karma Gardri style. Before that, the main recorded location of the Karma Gardri style was in the late sixteenth century in Ü Province of central Tibet, not Kham.

What about paintings that date after the seventeenth century with thin priming coats and almost see-through colors (including transparent haloes)? Were they from Kham? In most cases, yes. Yet we still need to keep in mind the wide geographical distribution of the Karma Gardri style (mainly Kham-based). There were still artists



FIG. 1.13  
Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara with Guru Lineage  
Dolpo, northwestern Tibet; 1950s  
Painted by Dechen Labrang Lama  
Dimensions unknown  
Photograph by David Snellgrove, Dolpo, 1960–61  
Literature: David L. Snellgrove 1967, pl. 37; and D. Jackson 2006, fig. 1.

of the Karma Gardri style during the twentieth century; a few appear in Ü (especially at Tshurphu Monastery) and Ngari (in Dolpo and Spiti). A number of significant paintings in that style survive in Ladakh and will be documented in chapter 9 by Rob Linrothe.

Figures 1.13 and 1.14 both possess stylistic features typical of “eastern Tibetan,” or Kham, paintings in recent centuries. They were published by David Snellgrove more than forty years ago in his book *Four Lamas of Dolpo*.<sup>31</sup> The faint skies (especially compared with the dark blue Tsang-style skies) and the shape and outlining of the clouds are typical of the nineteenth- or twentieth-century Gardri style of Kham (as we find in the portrait of Kongtrül in chapter 5, Fig. 5.4).

The overall background layout of Figure 1.13 is a bit more conservative,



FIG. 1.14  
Majig Labdrön with Assembly Field  
Dolpo, northwestern Tibet; 1950s  
Painted by Dechen Labrang Lama  
Dimensions unknown  
Photograph by David Snellgrove, Dolpo, 1960–61  
Literature: David Snellgrove 1967, pl. 38; and D. Jackson 2006, fig. 2.

i.e., with more Menri elements, than that in Figure 1.14. Note how it places horizontal bands of clouds at the top and the Gardri grid or lattice of clouds behind the top head of the main figure.<sup>32</sup> These features are reminiscent of Menri-style paintings in Dolpo of the seventeenth century. (Compare the similar Menri cloud lattices in Figs. 7.5–7.7.)

Both were actually painted in the 1960s by a lama-painter from the Dolpo district in Nepal. The artist had personal links with the Karma Kagyu School and had assumed a “Kham” style during a long stay at Tshurphu Monastery in central Tibet.

When estimating the general extent of Chinese influence in a painting or tradition, it is better to exclude iconographic cycles of Chinese origin such as the Sixteen Arhats, the Four Great Guardian Kings of the Directions, and



FIG. 1.15

Mandala from the Vajrāvalī Cycle  
Commissioned by Ngorchon in Memory of  
Sazang Phakpa  
Ngor Monastery, Tsang Province, Tibet;  
1429–1456  
36 ¼ x 29 ¼ in. (92.1 x 74.3 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2007.6.1 (HAR 81826)  
Literature: D. Jackson 2010, fig. 8.6.

the Hundred Deeds of the Buddha.<sup>33</sup> It is more telling stylistically to compare depictions of geographically “neutral”—i.e., originally Indian—iconographic cycles or subjects.

#### TWO TRADITIONS WITH SPECIAL LINKS TO THE NORTHEAST (JONANG AND BON)

It could be more revealing of geographical origins to concentrate on smaller religious traditions that were more specific to certain localities. The Jonang tradition was suppressed in central Tibet and its mother monastery converted in the 1640s. That historical disaster might become a boon for art history, since all Jonang art that dated later than 1700 would be expected to come from parts of Amdo where branches of the tradition survived virtually intact, such as Golok, Gyalrong, and Ngapa.

Most accessible paintings of the Bon tradition have a “northeastern Tibetan” flavor. Though followers of Bon lived throughout Tibet, they (along with the paintings they commissioned) are found mostly in northern Kham Province (such as Khyungpo), Amdo Province, and in the far-eastern border district of Gyalrong.

#### LEAVING THE FIELD EMPTY

What if despite your best efforts, the provenance remains unknown? My suggestion: state “provenance uncertain” or leave the provenance field blank. I know



it is a heresy among many museum curators to leave such fields empty. We all feel pressured to write in something—anything! Yet it is counterproductive to litter a publication with dozens of highly speculative and often erroneous regional attributions.

Imagine the impact it would have twenty years from now if junior colleagues started specifying exactly on what grounds they have based their regional attributions. Until now the geographic categories have been unsatisfactory and the underlying assumptions for such attributions have never been convincingly enumerated. Even if it is purely speculative, I beg you, future scholars, please articulate your stylistic principles for others to consider and

test! For instance, “Clouds and skies of such a type are typical of such and such a province in such and such a period. Compare the murals of...” But please make sure the painting you compare is itself reliably attributed.

#### THE ETHNIC ORIGIN OF PAINTERS

The vast majority of surviving *thangkas* from Tibet were painted by Tibetans. Though Newar metalworkers maintained a presence in Tibet for many centuries (especially in Tsang on the main Kathmandu to Lhasa trade route), Newar painters were rare. A few important paintings by Newar painters in fifteenth-century Tibet are mentioned in the biographies of lamas, as was the case in



Figure 1.15.<sup>34</sup> I do not remember reading about other Newar painters visiting Tibet after about the mid-fifteenth century.

To say a Tibetan painting was painted in an Indian, Newar, Chinese, or any other “foreign” style does not imply the presence of those painters in Tibet, any more than my saying “I cooked Italian food” means that I or my pasta actually came from Italy (though my noodles occasionally do).

## PAINTING SCHOOLS AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

To complicate things, each province was home to more than one artistic school. These were sometimes located in specific districts or monasteries. A detailed knowledge of the development of both major and minor styles within each province is the holy grail of connoisseurship.

To trace stylistic developments within the same religious school can be a very helpful strategy. Since the iconographic basis or “background” remains relatively static, this makes divergences more obvious. When comparing works within a single school of Tibetan Buddhism, we should analyze paintings of the same class (peaceful, etc.), the same subject (the very same deity or founding lama) in order to maximize the stylistic contrast. After we have made synchronous collections of paintings in all five provinces of Tibet, we can identify artistic trends specific to religious schools and distinguish them from more general conventions used in the provinces or nationally.<sup>35</sup>

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INSCRIPTIONS

Inscriptions can be decisive at nearly every stage.<sup>36</sup> Most initial attributions of provenance and period rely on their accurate reading and interpretation. The same

goes for iconography in complicated paintings of high quality, which typically do have them. Often they can be read only by scholars when good photographs have been taken (and remember, the back side may also be essential).

The inscriptions on the back side if written in ink should be fairly legible. But those on the front side may not be that easy. If written in gold (as they usually are), they may be hard to find, never mind read. They tend to blend into the background if that base color is not sufficiently dark. One of the great advantages of the HAR website is that its images are of a sufficiently high resolution “such that even the captions are legible.”<sup>37</sup> Yet many gold captions cannot be read unless the photographer notices the presence of gold writing and adds additional light from the right angle to make the gold reflect more.

All inscriptions must be recorded exactly and exhaustively and in case of doubtful readings checked again against the best available photographs. This includes partly illegible ones. Sometimes a single half-effaced name yields the decisive evidence for identifying and dating an entire set of magnificent paintings.<sup>38</sup>

Let us consider Figures 1.16 and 1.17, statues that both portray Lowo Khenchen Sönam Lhündrub (1456–1532), the princely monk of Mustang, Nepal.<sup>39</sup> The three main possibilities for the provenance of statues of this master are: Lo Mustang, Ngor, and Sakya. The first location was his homeland, the next two were monasteries where he taught and near the end of his life was highly esteemed. The vast majority of his statues probably came from Mustang, though that can be established only by studying and comparing many of his portraits. We must check each inscription.<sup>40</sup>

For Figures 1.16 and 1.17, the identity of the sculpture’s subject could be indisputably established thanks to an inscription. Figure 1.16 has a long

FIG. 1.16

Lowo Khenchen Sönam Lhündrub  
Artisan: Namkha Drag, active 16th century  
Mustang, northwestern Nepal; early 16th century  
Copper alloy with silver and copper inlay and gold pigment  
11 ¼ x 8 ¾ x 6 ½ inches  
(28.6 x 21.3 x 16.5 cm)  
Purchased with the Stella Kramrisch Fund, 2003  
Philadelphia Museum of Art (2003–6–1)  
Literature: Sotheby’s New York, Indian and Southeast Asian Art, March 26, 2003, no. 59; and A. Heller 2010 in E. Lo Bue ed. 2010, p. 96.

inscription that extends all the way around the base and names the artist: Namkha Drag (Nam mkha’ grags). He was a sculptor also active at Khojarnath Temple in Purang in 1512.<sup>41</sup>

The inscription of Figure 1.16:

[Line 1:] swasti/ dge legs bsod  
nams bye ba’i gzi ’bar zhing// nges  
don gnang ba’i ye shes lhun gyis grub//  
legs pa’i lam ston mthar pa’i ’byung  
gnas kyis// ’gro kun dpal ’byor bzang  
por mdzad la ’dud// mtshungs med bla  
ma ’jam pa’i dbyangs// ’jig rten mgon  
dang rdo rje ’dzin// rgyal ba kun gyi sku  
gsung thugs// gzugs sku’i nram par shar  
ba ’di// sngon dus dus khri srong lde’u  
btsan gyi// las kha ’dzin zhing deng sang  
dus// a ma dpal gyi gdung ’dzin pa’i// mi  
dbang bka’ yi blon

[line 2:] gyi mchog// tshe dbang  
rgyal po gang de dang// de’i dgongs  
pa’i dpal ’dzin ma// dpal ’dzom gus  
pas bzhengs pa’i// dge bas sbyin bdag  
’cho ’grang bcas// gnas khang tshe ring  
nad med ’byor ldan zhing// mthar thug  
rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas shog// sprul pa’i  
lha bzo nam mkha’ grags// mangga lam//

According to the previous documentation, the patrons of the statue were a nobleman named Tshewang Gyalpo and his wife Paldzinma. The patroness’s









FIG. 1.16A and 1.16B  
Side and back of Fig. 1.16

name was Paldzom; the phrase “Paldzinma” before her name means, “She who upholds the glory of him, [Tshewang Gyalpo.]” The inscription describes her husband as a minister who “supports the descendants of Amapal,” i.e., the kings of Mustang.

Here Lowo Khenchen sits, his right hand up in a teaching gesture, his left hand upturned to hold a blazing jewel on his lap. The symbolic “insignia” (*phyag mtshan*) on the lotus flowers to the right and left of his shoulders are the flaming sword and Perfection of Wisdom scriptures. These insignia represent Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom. One distinctive mark is the typical silver and copper inlay. Another is the presence of mercury (Tib. “hot gold”) gilding—not the more

usual “cold gold” (gold powder applied with glue).

Figure 1.17, the second statue of Lowo Khenchen, has a more typically taciturn inscription, identifying the subject by stating only the final two elements of his name: “Homage to Mañjuśrī, Legpe Jungne!” (*‘jam pa’i dbyangs legs pa’i ‘byung gnas la na mo//*). Once again, the great abbot holds his right hand in teaching gesture and his left upturned. He holds the emblems of Mañjuśrī. The jewel that probably once rested on his left hand is now missing. (This statue shows his eyes with silver inlay but otherwise lacks the colorful multiple ornamentations often found in Mustang bronzes of this period.)

#### A LONG-TERM PROJECT

Sometimes you cannot interpret inscriptions immediately. Once they have been

published in as complete and accurate a form as possible, they can be interpreted gradually by the community of interested historians. The initial documentation helps this process a lot. Once the inscriptions are recorded, later historians can also gain a wider perspective, filling in what is absent in sets, identifying those figures or *thangkas* that were missed the first time around. This is a long-term cumulative process. It benefits from the varying expertise that each subsequent generation of researchers can contribute.

Though nobody disputes the importance of inscriptions, in some catalogs they are still handled in a perfunctory way. For those who cannot read them, inscriptions are not automatically a top priority. Many important gold captions are hidden to begin with; many inscriptions on both front and back have lain unnoticed for decades. If you do find them, it is often difficult to find a





FIG. 1.17  
Lowo Khenchen Sönam Lhündrub  
Mustang, northwestern Nepal; late 15th-  
early 16th century  
Bronze  
Height 13 in. (33 cm)  
Private Collection  
Photograph courtesy John Eskenazi

specialist to decipher them satisfactorily, especially if they are complicated or in difficult cursive scripts. At the very least their presence should be noted and a first attempt to understand them should be made. Thirty years from now the treatment of inscriptions might still remain difficult, but by then their importance would be obvious.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Hopes for improving the discipline of Tibetan art history will be nothing but a

dream if the desired improvements cannot be realized. Much could be gained in the next ten or fifteen years if younger scholars were to begin applying a sounder historical method, rejecting inexact and unreliable methods of the past.

What does a painting show? When was it made? Where did it come from? These basic questions deserve careful, responsible answers, even if that answer is, “Date or provenance uncertain, evidence lacking.” For matters as vital as dating and provenance, pure conjecture and unfounded “suggestions” no longer have any place within serious scholarship.

A good eye and broadly based connoisseurship will continue to inform an educated guess in other contexts, but they are no substitutes for carefully applied historical method. If we do decide to assert something as a historical probability about a provenance, we

should explain it convincingly and provide sound evidence. All students of historical disciplines are expected to distinguish between a statement that asserts a mere possibility (“It may be that”) from one asserting a probability (“It probably is that”).<sup>42</sup> It is thus very disconcerting to see a feeble “It may *possibly* be x” assertion earlier in a catalog entry appearing later as the decisive reason for “Therefore it *probably* is y.”

Future catalogers must remove weak and undeserved attributions and proofs—pruning back also the many speculative vines that sprout from them. Would the remaining catalog become barren and deserted? Perhaps at first. Yet how else will we ever restore Tibetan art history to vigor as a discipline if we do not conscientiously eliminate unfounded assertions?







TO ATTRIBUTE the provenance as accurately and reliably as possible is thus essential. One of the key ways for assigning a painting to its original place of origin is precisely to recognize its provincial or local style. (Here “provincial” means “belonging to a province,” and to minimize confusion I avoid calling them regional styles because I use the term region to designate areas comprising two provinces, such as the region of central Tibet.) Though “recent” and hence relatively unimportant in the eyes of many Western connoisseurs, the provincial stylistic categories of the last two or three centuries from Ü, Tsang, or Kham are indispensable for art history.

The main provincial styles of Tibetan painting are virtually unknown in Western scholarship. Yet they are essential for an adequate description of Tibetan painting. They are the stylistic categories used by artists and historians from Tibet, including art historians.<sup>43</sup>

In general, all provincial or local Tibetan painting styles of recent centuries are believed to have derived from the three main styles: Menri, Khyenri, and Karma Gardri. The four main provincial styles originated from the Menri. They included the modern successors to the Old Menri in Ü, the Eri style, and two or three branches of the New Menri, one in Tsang (especially at Tashilhunpo), another in Kham, and possibly a third in Amdo.

We thus must begin distinguishing the Üri (or Eri) from Tsangri styles, similarly distinguishing paintings of Kham from those of Amdo. Previous Western

scholarly discussions of central and eastern Tibetan styles have been sketchy, classifying paintings from both regions under overly broad categories, without distinguishing the individual provinces.

In the following chapters I will briefly summarize some of my stylistic conclusions, though I have not yet visited all five provinces or interviewed painters there. Examining photographs of recent paintings—including the works of living traditional painters—is necessary, especially for rare and poorly known traditions.

#### THE FIVE TRADITIONAL PROVINCES OF TIBET

The five traditional provinces of Greater Tibet were: Ü, Tsang, Kham, Amdo, and Ngari. The first two together make up central Tibet, which is called by the composite name Ü-Tsang. We could call Ü “[eastern]-central or just central Tibet” and Tsang “western-central Tibet.” The next two, Kham and Amdo, also form a pair: both are in eastern Tibet, one to the north of the other. We can thus call Kham “southeastern Tibet” and Amdo “northeastern Tibet.” The remaining province, Ngari, lies by itself to the west of Tsang, and can therefore be called “western Tibet.” These names remain true to Tibetan geography and are more accurate as descriptions than the division names far-eastern Tibet (Amdo), eastern Tibet (Kham), central Tibet (Ü), western Tibet (Tsang), and far-western Tibet (Ngari) that we sometimes encounter.<sup>44</sup>

The Tibetan plateau tilts from

northwest to southeast, with altitudes varying from 1,700 meters low in the southernmost valleys to more than 8,000 meters high in the Himalayan massif. Spoken Tibetan extends over four main geographic zones:<sup>45</sup>

1. The central agricultural valleys of the Brahmaputra basin (Ü-Tsang)
2. The more densely populated alpine gorges and grassland in the east (Kham and Amdo)
3. The arid far-western highlands (Ngari)
4. The Northern Plain (Changthang) sparsely inhabited by Horpa nomads

From early historical times, Greater Tibet was divided into three main traditional regions (*chol kha gsum*) of Ü-Tsang, Kham (*mdo stod*), and Amdo (*mdo smad*). In his guidebook, Gyurme Dorje says:<sup>46</sup>

Ü-Tsang extends from Ngari [West Tibet] in the upper Indus and Sutlej valleys through the Brahmaputra basin as far as Sokla Kyawo in the Upper Salween. Kham extends eastward from Sokla Kyawo across the Mekong and Yangtze toward the source of the Yellow River. Amdo extends further eastwards from the source of the Yellow River and Golok to Chöten Karpo [The White Stupa] on the Sang-chu and through the Minjiang basin to Drukchu. [To these should be added Gyalrong.]

Detail of Fig. 2.2



Though Ü and Tsang thus formed together a “central Tibetan” region, Kham and Amdo were never traditionally merged as a greater region, “eastern Tibet.” Ngari Province was originally the country of Shangshung (Zhang Zhung), which was first incorporated into the Tibetan empire in the seventh century.

#### THE FULL GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

Tibetan Buddhist painting extended through a large part of central Asia to wherever Tibetan Buddhism was established. Of the five traditional provinces of Tibet proper, four had their own styles. In the outlying border districts, a number of local traditions developed to the south, west, and east. These include the Himalayan districts or principalities of Bhutan, Sikkim, Mustang, Ladakh, as well as many smaller and lesser known places. Another group of border styles can be found in the eastern and northeastern borderlands with China like Lijiang and Gyalrong. Still more distant countries or districts that were home to Tibetan Buddhists farther away to the east and northeast included Mongolia, Mongol-populated parts of Russia, such as Buriatia, Inner Mongolia, Manchuria, and parts of northern China.

We should thus not ignore the painting practiced in the borderlands or those from the countries that had adopted Tibetan Buddhism (or Bon) yet were ethnically not Tibetan. (“Tibetan Buddhist painting” is used here in the broadest sense including Bon art.)

It is important to note whether a border region or outlying county was ethnically and linguistically Tibetan. Kinnuar (Khunu) in the western Tibetan borderlands and Gyalrong in the east both produced outstanding Tibetan Buddhist scholastics, but in both a non-Tibetan dialect was spoken at home. Still, they are culturally and religiously “Tibetan.”

Himalayan borderland principalities and districts that were ethnically Tibetan and possessed neighboring non-Tibetan communities can be grouped into three regions, from east to west:<sup>47</sup>

#### *Eastern Himalayas*

- Arunachal Pradesh areas east of Bhutan<sup>48</sup>
- Bhutan and Sikkim<sup>49</sup>

#### *Central Himalayas (Nepal Himalayas)*

- Sherpa districts of north central and northeastern Nepal<sup>50</sup>
- Mustang and Dolpo of northwestern Nepal, including the Muktinath valley and lower Kali Gandaki, whose non-Tibetan areas included Serib, Thak Khola, and Manang
- Limi in Humla, western Nepal<sup>51</sup>

#### *Western Himalayas (and Western Tibet)*<sup>52</sup>

- Lahoul, Spiti, and Kinnuar
- Ladakh and Zangskar of Jammu and Kashmir

Major Tibetan Buddhist borderlands in the east included Gyalrong and Lijiang (in Yunnan). Among the several more distant Tibetan Buddhist lands to the northeast or north that were not ethnically Tibetan we find: Mongolia, including Mongol-speaking parts of Russia (such as the Kalmuk and Buriat Mongols), Manchuria, and northern China.

#### THE FOUR RECENT PROVINCIAL STYLES

The four main provincial styles of Tibetan painting in the last two or three centuries were the styles associated with the four provinces of central and eastern Tibet: Ü, Tsang, Kham, and Amdo. As we shall see in chapter 8, distinctive “Lamaist” paintings were also commissioned in Bhutan and Mongolia. The Qing-dynasty court

sponsored temples in northern China and Inner Mongolia. Bon painting flourished in the far-eastern districts of Rebkong (Amdo), Khyungpo (northern Kham), Ngapa, and Gyalrong, as I hope to document in a future catalog.

#### TRADITIONAL NAMES

Tibetan painters and art savants commonly distinguished four main provincial styles, naming three of them after their province of origin and using such terms as: Üri or Ü style (Dbus bris), Tsang-gri or Tsang style (Gtsang bris), and Khamri or Kham style (Khams bris). The predominant provincial style of Amdo was not called Amdo style, but I see no harm in calling it Rebkong style, after the community of origin, Rebkong. (It is sometimes called “Rebkong Art” [Re bkong sgyu rtsal] in modern Tibetan publications, but not yet as Re bkong bris.)

All four of these provincial styles were local branches of the Menri, the style that dominated most of Tibet from the sixteenth century onward. However, each province was home to more than one painting school or sub-school. Hence each province must be investigated in detail.

#### TRADITIONAL LISTS OF STYLES

Tibetan artists used those provincial style names such as Üri or Tsangri to refer to the style that was by common consensus acknowledged to be most widespread in each province in recent generations. For instance, Yeshe Jamyang (b. 1932), an old monk-painter of the Drigung Kagyu tradition who came from western Ladakh, repeated a traditional list of six painting styles:<sup>53</sup>

1. Gyari [Rgya bris], the painting style of China
2. Khamri [Khams bris], the painting style of Kham



3. Driri [ʼBri bris], the painting style of Drigung [in northern Ü Province]
4. Tshuri [Mtshur bris], the painting style of Tshurphu [Tshurphu Monastery in northeastern Ü]
5. Eri [E bris], the painting style of E district [in southeastern Ü]
6. Tsangri [Gtsang bris], the painting style of Tsang Province [particularly at Tashilhunpo Monastery]

Three of these refer to provincial styles, Khamri, Eri, and Tsangri, one refers to a national style, Gyari, and two to the styles based at prominent Kagyu monasteries, Driri and Tshuri. (Eri was named after a place in Ü but it is often called by the province-based name Üri.)

The same artist, Yeshe Jamyang, repeated the following traditional phrases that contrasted four of those painting schools, differentiating them on the basis of the relative brightness or darkness in color schemes:<sup>54</sup>

1. “Chinese style was like a rainbow in the sky” (Rgya bris *nam mkha’i ja’ tshon ’dra*).
2. “The painting style of Kham was like the dusk of evening” (Khams ris *mun pa rub pa ’dra*).
3. “The style of E district is like the dawn” (E bris *nam mkha’ lang pa ’dra*).<sup>55</sup>
4. “The painting style of Drigung is like after sunrise” (ʼBri bris *nyi ma shar ba ’dra*).

Using these phrases, we can compare paintings by detecting the lighter or darker tonalities of the styles particularly by examining their background skies and landscapes.

Such summary characterizations are useful for differentiating the central-Tibetan Menri traditions (such as Eri and Tsangri) from each other, but they should not be used in isolation, ignoring other criteria. The darkness or lightness

of the sky, in particular, does turn out to be a key point in stylistic difference.

#### EXAMPLES OF THE FOUR PROVINCIAL STYLES

If one of the main factors for assigning provenance is to recognize a painting’s provincial or local style, how hard is that to do in actual practice? Do the traditional comparisons regarding lighter or darker color schemes lead to any basic principles? Let us take a look at four typical paintings, one from each provincial style.

Comparing Figures 2.1 and 2.2, we find the painting representing the Eri style of Ü Province is generally lighter, while that exemplifying the Tsangri style from Tsang is somber.

When we turn to the next pair of paintings, Figures 2.3 and 2.4, things become more obscure. Both could be said to have dark colors applied over much of their painted surface. It is not the coloring of the deities but rather that of the landscape, particularly the green meadows and sky, that is most telling.

Comparing the skies, we can say that Figure 2.3, the painting from Kham, has a much lighter sky, while the painting from Amdo (Fig. 2.4) has a solid dark blue sky. But are Amdo skies always such a deep blue? When we investigate them in chapter 6, we see that paintings from Amdo show a lot of variety in their skies; many recent paintings have bright blue skies. So we might already conclude that a quick comparison of the lightness and darkness of color scheme works better for painting from Ü and Tsang Provinces, but not as simply for paintings from the eastern provinces.

#### EXAMPLES OF KHAM STYLES

As we will see again in chapter 5, the “Kham style” in Figure 2.3 is for many Western art historians not the expected

one. It is *not* the Karma Gardri, which is considered the “eastern Tibetan” style par excellence because of its Chinese stylistic component. Yeshe Jamyang named the Karma Gardri—whose painters used a palette of very faint colors—the Tshuri (mTshur bris), the “style of Tshurphu,” after its main monastic seat in central Tibet.

Let us look at three more paintings from Kham, Figures 2.5 through 2.7. The first (Fig. 2.5) is another example of that same Khamri style. Here we can compare another example with two other paintings from Kham, one with a lighter color scheme and the other with an even darker one.

Stylistic comparisons should become more effective when you compare paintings of the same subject, as here. All three are late renditions of the same three adepts (Ghāntāpa, Padmavajra, and Kukkuripa) among a set of eight great Tantric adepts designed by Situ Panchen.<sup>56</sup> They exemplify the Khamri, Tshuri (Karma Gardri), and Gyari (Chinese) styles, and all originate from nineteenth-century Kham.

When we look at Figure 2.5, the painting in the Khamri style, we see that it has a color scheme dominated by dark and rich colors. We see this especially in the sky and clouds forming an overall darker impression at first glance compared with Figure 2.6.

Among these three paintings, the second (Fig. 2.6), done in the Karma Gardri style, is overall the lightest with the most luminous color scheme. The sky has faint indigo shading and the clouds are a much brighter white. At the same time, the paint of rocky crags within the landscape was applied relatively thickly; the pale green meadow does not fade into the background color as is sometimes the case in Gardri paintings.

The third painting (Fig. 2.7), the one in the Chinese style, turns out to be one of the comparatively darker paintings, due to the widespread application of ink.





FIG. 2.1, also Fig. 3.2  
 Example of the Eri Style  
 Atiśa with Dromtön and Ngoktön  
 Lhasa, Tibet; late 19th or early 20th century  
 32 ¼ x 20 in. (82 x 51 cm)  
 Kept in the Norbu Lingka Palace  
 Literature: Rig 'dzin rdo rje et al. 1985, *Bod  
 kyi thang ka*, pl. 51.





FIG. 2.2, also Fig. 4.9  
 Example of the Tsangri Style  
 Buddha with Avadāna Moral Tales  
 Tsang Province, Tibet; ca. mid- or late 18th  
 century  
 33  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 22  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (85.4 x 56.5 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 F1996.27.1 (HAR 494)  
 Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
 no. 14, p. 159ff.





FIG. 2.3, also Fig. 5.7  
 Example of the Khamri Style  
 Tārā Saving from the Eight Perils  
 Kham Province, Tibet; late 19th century  
 25 ¼ x 17 in. (64.1 x 43.2 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 F1997.15.1 (HAR 237)  
 Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
 no. 38, p. 207.





FIG. 2.4, also Fig. 6.5  
 Example of the Style of Rebkong in Amdo  
 Avalokiteśvara  
 Rebkong, Amdo Province, Tibet; 20th  
 century  
 18  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 16  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (47.7 x 42 cm)  
 Hahn Cultural Foundation  
 Literature: K. Tanaka 1999, p. 150f., no. 67.



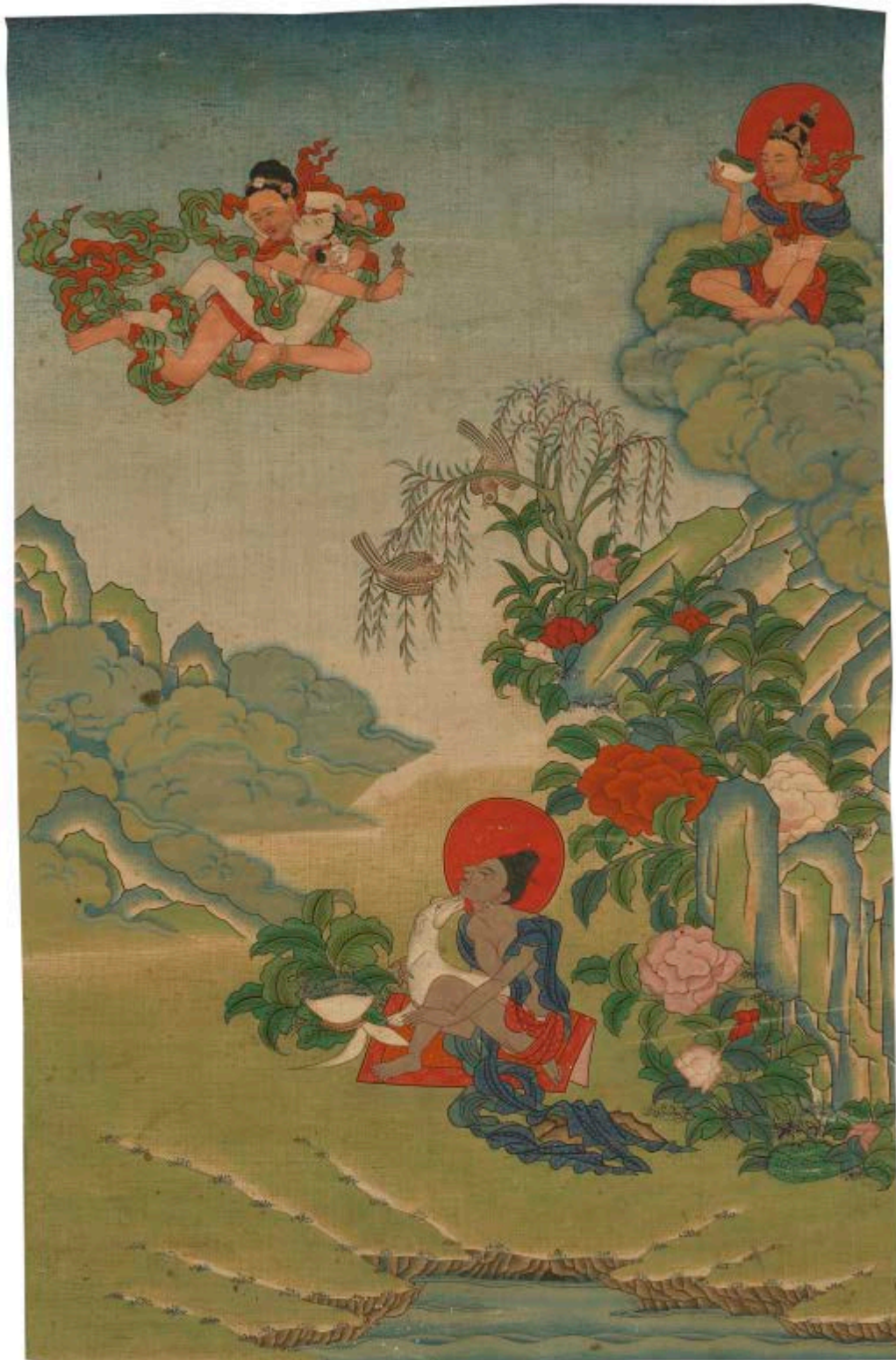


FIG. 2.5  
 Three of Situ Panchen's Eight Great Adepts  
 in a Khamri Style  
 Kham Province, Tibet; 19th century  
 11 x 11  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (27.9 x 29.8 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2006.66.434 (HAR 889)  
 Literature: D. Jackson 2009, fig. 7.18.





FIG. 2.6  
 Three of Situ Panchen's Eight Great Adepts  
 in a Karma Gardri Style  
 Kham Province, Tibet; 19th century  
 20 ¼ x 15 in. (51.4 x 38.1 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 F1997.40.7 (HAR 588)  
 Literature: D. Jackson 2009, fig. 7.17.







(Yeshe Jamyang did not have this type of Chinese painting in mind since the use of ink in this way was very rare in Tibet.) I would not have included it here, except that it demonstrates so well the unexpected stylistic variety from Kham.

## CONCLUSION

In the last four centuries, four provincial styles (local variants of the Menri style) dominated Tibetan painting. It will be our task to try to learn them, discriminating whenever possible paintings from the two central provinces, Ü and Tsang, and those from the two eastern provinces, Kham and Amdo. We must learn to compare them not only with the major styles but also with the minor styles that coexisted within a given province, as noted in the local styles of Kham (Figs. 2.5–2.7).

To investigate the local styles properly, we shall need to consider each of them individually, confirming their characteristic details. Though time does not permit a more detailed description, I would like to compare at the very least several key elements of landscapes—skies, clouds, glacier peaks, and so forth—and a few other stylistic features, such as the ornamentation of deities' heads, especially the spacing of main jewels or skulls. (Many other features should be included in future studies.)



FIG. 2.7  
Three of Situ Panchen's Eight Great Adepts  
in a Chinese Style  
Kham Province, Tibet; 19th century  
17 ½ x 10 in. (44.4 x 25.4 cm)  
Literature: D. Jackson 2009, fig. 7.19

FIG. 2.6A (opposite page)  
detail of Fig. 2.6







Ü PROVINCE is the geographical heart of central Tibet. The Tibetan name Ü (Tib. *dbus*) means “center.” With Tsang, it is counted as the eastern of two central provinces. Yet it can be called just central Tibet and Tsang western-central Tibet.

Ü consists of the eastern-central agricultural valleys of the Brahmaputra basin of central Tibet (Ü-Tsang), including the watersheds of the Kyichu River and the eastern Brahmaputra River. Its heartland is the fertile and densely inhabited Kyichu Valley, where Tibet’s capital city, Lhasa, is situated.<sup>57</sup> It also encompasses the areas south of the Brahmaputra River including Lhokha, Kongpo, and Lhodrak, an area comprising sixteen counties that some modern sources call “Southern Tibet.”<sup>58</sup>

#### ERI: THE PREDOMINANT MENRI STYLE OF Ü PROVINCE IN RECENT CENTURIES

In both Ü and Tsang Provinces, the Menri became the most widespread style by the early sixteenth century. By the eighteenth century, each province was dominated by its variations. The prevailing Menri style in Lhasa and Ü Province since the early nineteenth century was the Eri, shown in Figures 3.1–3.4. The three-lobed cumulus clouds with darkly shaded deep recesses are typical during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Eri, meaning “Style of E,” was named after the artists based in the E district of Lhokha.

Many typical *thangkas* in the Eri style have been published, though not identified as such.<sup>59</sup> Numerous other examples can be found in murals of Potala Palace in Lhasa. Figure 3.1 is a mural detail in the Western Residence (Shargyü Simchung, Shar rgyud gzims chung) chapel of White Palace. It dates to the time of the extensive renovations and repainting in 1922 to 1924, during the period of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama Thubten Gyatsho (Thub bstan rgya mtsho, 1875–1933). In recent books on the murals of that palace, many Eri

murals from the 1920s were wrongly dated in the captions to the 1640s, the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama, though most of the murals in Potala Palace were repainted during this major renovation period of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.

FIG. 3.1  
Buddha Performing a Great Miracle  
Shargyü Simchung chapel (Shar rgyud  
gzims chung), White Palace, Potala, Lhasa;  
1922–1924  
Literature: Phun tshogs tshe brtan et al.  
comps. 2000, *A Mirror of the Murals in the  
Potala*, p. 174.



Detail of Fig. 3.19





FIG. 3.2  
*Thangka* in the Eri Style from Potala Palace  
 Śākyamuni with Buddhas of the Past and  
 Future  
 Lhasa, Tibet; early 20th century  
 33 x 21 ¾ in. (84 x 55 cm)  
 Kept in Potala Palace  
 Literature: Rig ‘dzin rdo rje et al. 1985, *Bod  
 kyi thang ka*, plate no. 27.



FIG. 3.3  
*Thangka* in the Eri Style from Norbu Lingka  
 Palace  
 Atiśa with Dromtön and Ngoktön  
 Lhasa, Tibet; late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century  
 32 ¼ x 20 in. (82 x 51 cm)  
 Kept in Norbu Lingka Palace  
 Literature: Rig ‘dzin rdo rje et al. 1985, *Bod  
 kyi thang ka*, plate no. 51.



Fig. 3.3a  
 Clouds with “cloud-eyes” from the painting  
 manual of the contemporary Eri painter  
 Tenpa Rabten  
 After: Tenpa Rabten 2007, fig. 13.



The existence of the later repainting is mentioned by Phüntshok Tsheten (Phun tshogs tshe brtan) et al. near the end of their book on the Potala murals.<sup>60</sup> One unmistakable feature of those early-twentieth century murals is the light pale green that is applied to all green foregrounds of the murals. (That new synthetic green pigment is believed to have been imported from India.)

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 are two published *thangkas* (not murals) surviving in Potala Palace or Norbu Lingka that were painted during about the time of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. These paintings include the typical pale blue skies, symmetrical compositions, and decorative details (such as clouds and flowers).

One of the typical Eri features was its coloring and shading of three-lobed cumulus clouds. (See Fig. 3.3a.) Note the shape of the distinctive dark holes or recesses in the clouds, called “cloud-eyes” (*spring mig*) by painters of this tradition.<sup>61</sup> The shading of the edges on the right and left lobes made the center lobe of the cloud project forward more prominently.

Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 possess, in addition to the typical three-lobed Eri clouds, the large pink peony-like lotus flowers (usually behind the central throne), and in just Figure 3.2 brown rocky cliffs and blue-green crags typical of the Eri variety of the Menri style.

Figure 3.4 portrays Tsongkhapa and his two main disciples according to one of the five visions that Khedrup had of his guru.<sup>62</sup> The balanced composition employs the usual blue and green three-lobed Eri clouds with holes (though not in the white mass of clouds around the central figure). More complex than normal, the sky is divided into upper and lower fields by an unseen border about a third of the way down the *thangka* (slightly above the head nimbus of Tsongkhapa). The lower field (surrounding the white clouds around the main figure) is a solid medium blue. No snowy



peaks loom in the landscape. (The five skulls on Yama’s head are evenly spaced, another typical Eri feature.)

The presence of golden auspicious objects raining down in the sky is unusual as is the decoration of the inner green field of the main figure’s head nimbus with golden suns and dots—these are both very rare features in the Üri style but occur in some Amdo traditions. (The shower of golden auspicious

Fig. 3.4  
Tsongkhapa  
Ü Province, Tibet; 19th century  
24 ¾ x 16 in. (62.9 x 40.6 cm)  
From the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Walter  
Warren Wilds  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2007.22.2 (HAR 65799)



objects are found in Figures 4.16, 4.17, and 6.12, while Figures 6.5 and 6.12, two paintings from Amdo, also demonstrate the decorated inner field of the main figure's head nimbus with golden brocade designs.)

Figure 3.5 is painted in a fairly typical Üri or Eri style; it depicts Guru Drakpoche and the peaceful and wrathful deities of the state between death and the next life (*bar do*). When we look mainly at the placement of deities, we see that the composition is symmetrical. Painted as a single plane, the sky is gradually shaded with indigo from top to bottom. The horizon is left almost ungraded and quite light, a dull off-white.

The painting features again three-lobed Eri clouds colored pale bluish and greenish white. There are no snow mountains. This subject would not have been appropriate for them; the composition is reminiscent of a depiction of a pure-realm (*zhing khams*), thus the subject matter does require a mountainous setting. A few horizontal clouds have been painted pink, along with adjoining blue and green ones. The outer white edges of clouds are without outlines, as generally required in central-Tibetan Menri styles, according to my informants.

#### FURTHER *THANGKAS* IN THE ERI (ÜRI) STYLE

The painters from E maintain that their style continues an Old Menri tradition of Ü Province.<sup>63</sup> Their Üri painting style is often called the “Eri style” after its origin in E or Eyül (E yul) district in southern Ü.<sup>64</sup> Painting in the Eri style became for many a hereditary occupation protected in Lhasa by a professional association with a local monopoly.

In Lhasa, by the 1920s, the style had become somewhat stiff and formalized through its heavy frontally portrayed figures, endlessly repeated clouds



and peony-like lotuses, and almost unfailingly symmetrical compositions. The heaviness was partially alleviated through its light palette. Some Eri painters occasionally introduced Chinese flowering trees or bushes as minor decorative elements in the landscape. The Chinese flower- or fruit-laden trees in particular, when inserted into the picture out of proportion to the rigid, frontally depicted main figures, seem a

Fig. 3.5  
Guru Drakpoche and the Between-State Deities  
Ü Province, Tibet; ca. 18th century  
28 x 18 ¼ in. (71.1 x 46.4 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.38.1 (HAR 557)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, no. 179, p. 445f.





FIG. 3.6  
The Three Great Early Rulers of Tibet  
Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet; early 20th  
century  
35  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 56  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (90 x 144 cm)  
Literature: Rigdzin Dorje et al. 1985, *Bod  
kyi thang ka*, plates 15.

bit naive in paintings of otherwise highly professional workmanship. (Those Chinese trees are said to have been first introduced by Tshering Gyawo, who had visited China with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. They did not spread throughout every branch of the Eri tradition.)

Figure 3.6 depicts the Eri style in a *thangka* painting of unusual shape. Here the trees harmonize fairly well within the landscape. We also find examples in murals of Potala Palace that were painted during the period of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.<sup>65</sup>

#### WAS THE ERI AN OLD OR NEW MENRI?

Two points need to be clarified about the “Eri” style at Lhasa and elsewhere in Ü Province. First, was it a continuation of a New or Old Menri? And second, did it ever become in recent centuries a pan-Tibetan or universal style?

E. Gene Smith in a pioneering publication of 1970 made the misleading

suggestion that the New Menri of Chöying Gyatsho was the main origin of the later twentieth-century Lhasa or central-Tibetan style of painting (after blending with “Khyenri, Gardri and later Indian influences”).<sup>66</sup> Marilyn Rhie in her *Worlds of Transformation* catalog later repeated that same opinion several times, maintaining that Chöying Gyatsho’s New Menri later developed into the style of Lhasa. No traditional source, however, supports that it was a New Menri.

The main modern continuation of the New Menri of Chöying Gyatsho was not the recent Üri style, but rather the Tsangri style of Tsang Province, especially at Tashilhunpo.<sup>67</sup> But if the typical style of Ü Province of the nineteenth and early twentieth century did not follow that New Menri tradition, where did it come from? Its main upholders, the artists from E district, staunchly maintain that it continued a branch of the Old Menri (sMan mying), a fact that previous Western scholars often overlooked or misunderstood.<sup>68</sup>

#### WAS THE ERI A LHASA-BASED MENRI “INTERNATIONAL” STYLE?

Marilyn Rhie followed several previous scholars in calling the same Lhasa-based Menri an “international style.” I have not

found any evidence or authority supporting that assertion. She suggested that the New Menri of the Potala murals became a style for Geluk monasteries throughout Tibet and was an international style spreading to Geluk establishments in Mongolia and China.<sup>69</sup> She described it as “a handsome and complex style, which can overpower the viewer with its mass of detail.”<sup>70</sup> (But as we shall see in chapter 8, Geluk art in Mongolia and China was highly distinct and was not in the Eri.)

Many *thangkas* were indeed executed in an elegant style reminiscent of Chöying Gyatsho’s New Menri style in Lhasa and Ü for a few generations, beginning in the mid-seventeenth century (in about the times of the Sixth through Eighth or Ninth Dalai Lamas). Gilles Béguin noticed among the stylistically related *thangkas* he studied in Paris that sometime after the late eighteenth century this style came to an abrupt end (at least in Ü, though not in Tsang).<sup>71</sup> This presumably coincided with the establishment of the Eri as the dominant style.

Paintings from the time of the Desi Sanggye Gyatsho (sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, 1653–1705) represent a high point in this seventeenth-century Menri. But that style is difficult to distinguish from the Tsangri. We must also be cautious since many outstanding painters from Tsang came to work in Ü on many occasions between the 1640s and 1930s. Their *thangkas* were also preserved in the temples at and near Lhasa, such as in Potala Palace.

#### CONNECTIONS WITH E

Thus the recent Old Menri typical of Ü Province is the Eri, which had been named after the district of E in southern Ü, from which many prominent painters and sculptors came.<sup>72</sup> The well-known artist and university professor Tenpa Rabten (bsTan pa rab brtan or “Temba Rabden”) informed me that his family,



the Khadok Lhoma (Kha dog Lho ma), originally came from Kongpo Me (Kong po smad) village in E.<sup>73</sup> Tenpa Rabten's father was Kalsang Norbu (bsKal bzang nor bu), son of Epa Uchen Tshering Gya'u (E pa dBu chen Tshe ring rgya'u, b. 1872), an important painter patronized by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.<sup>74</sup> Tshering Gya'u's father was the painter Padma.

Tenpa Rabten's paternal (great) uncle was Tshering Döndrup (Las tshan Tshe ring don grub, 1902–1947), a senior *thangka* painter of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama with the rank of Letschen (*las tshan*).<sup>75</sup> His photograph taken in 1937 in Lhasa by C. Suydam Cutting has been reproduced numerous times, such as by C. Harris 1999.<sup>76</sup>

Figure 3.7 reproduces that photograph of Letschen Tshering Döndrup at work. If we check the details of the *thangka* he was painting, we can find some of the same decorative details as in the preceding painting (Fig. 3.6). The clouds in particular are more elaborately convoluted and shaded than in many Eri paintings of the period. Note also the Chinese tree that grows upward to the left at a slant, behind the body nimbus of the main figure, making the overall composition asymmetrical. (The tree is balanced by the large cluster of clouds above, right.)

Figure 3.8 depicts the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara as main figure, with the other two bodhisattvas of the Lords of the Three Lineages (Rigs gsum mgon po) shown below. It confirms the existence of this sub-type of the Eri that prominently featured Chinese flowering bushes or trees, here to the right and left of the main figure. This branch of the style was practiced in the 1920s and 1930s.

Thus the Eri hereditary lineage of artists has continued down to the contemporary painter Tenpa Rabten and others. Tenpa Rabten estimated that painters from families that originally came from E district (though in recent generations many were actually born in Lhasa or



elsewhere outside E) made up about ninety percent of the Lhasa painters working for the official artist and artisan office (*bzo khang*). This was true also of clay sculptors. The majority of sculptors of gilt images came, by contrast, from Tsedong in Tsang.<sup>77</sup>

The Eri as the officially approved style of the Lhasa government was sometimes loosely called the “government style” (*gzhung ris*). It was an “official” style since the painters working for the government artists and artisans office (Zhol ’Dod dpal las khung) followed the tradition; they apparently also belonged to their own artists’ mutual-benefit

FIG. 3.7  
Letschen Tshering Döndrup  
Lhasa, Tibet; 1937  
Photograph by C. Suydam Cutting  
Literature: D. Jackson 1984, p. 14; and C. Harris 1999, p. 89, fig. 38.

FIG. 3.8 (opposite page)  
Avalokiteśvara  
20th century  
Color and gold on cotton  
24 3/8 x 17 1/8 in. (61.9 x 43.5 cm)  
Brooklyn Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Wiesenberger, 69.164.8 (HAR 86925)







association (*skyid sdug*). According to Veronika Ronge, this artisan's office was distinct from a mutual-benefit association for painters from outside Lhasa who were long-term residents but came from different occupations, and were not just painters.<sup>78</sup> However, Tenpa Rabten and others referred to a specific association for painters (*lha bris skyid sdug*).

#### FOLLOWERS OF THE ERI IN WESTERN TSANG

Eri painters and sculptors sometimes were invited to other provinces. Moreover, the Eri was sometimes learned by painters who came from other provinces to Ü and then brought it back to their homes. One example is the family of Wangdrak (dBang grags, 1925–1988) of Shekar (Shel dkar) in western Tsang.<sup>79</sup> The style he had learned from his father was a branch of the modern Menri from Ü Province. Thus, though born and raised in Tsang, he did not paint in a typical Tsangri style. This came about because his grandfather had gone to Lhasa two generations earlier and received training under an Eri painting master.<sup>80</sup>

Wangdrak's grandfather was Khepa Tshe (mKhas pa Tshe). Originally a monk of Shekar Monastery, as a teenager (presumably around the 1880s) he and two monk friends ran away. His original monastic teacher traced him and the other runaways to Lhasa, writing to a Lhasa nobleman friend, "If he is still a monk, make him remain a monk. If not, then have him learn there some art or craft (*lag shes*)."

That nobleman accordingly arranged for Khepa Tshe to study painting under a master painter named Paljor Gyalpo (dPal 'byor rgyal po), a head artist (*che mo lags*, or "master," a group head for artists or painters) at the central government's art office.

Khepa Tshe mastered the art of painting, learning the prevalent Lhasa Eri style. One of his fellow students was another monk from Shekar, then

commonly called "He of Tshogo" (mTsho mgo ba) after his birthplace near Shekar. Later he became known as the "Great Abbot of Tshogo" (mTsho mgo mKhan chen). When they were about to leave Lhasa, his teacher remarked, "You should paint the wrathful figures and let Tshogowa (mTsho mgo ba) paint the peaceful ones. You two make a good team."

After returning to western Tsang, Khepa Tshe painted the murals of the Maitreya chapel (Byams khang) at Shekar. He painted in many places at Tsibri and at the end of his life painted at Purang in western Tibet. Lingka Trulku (Gling ka sPrul sku) of Shekar taught him mandala proportions.<sup>81</sup>

Wangdrak's father was Khepa Tshe's son, the master artist Khepa Top (mKhas pa sTobs), whose full name was Shekar Tshering Topgye (Tshe ring stobs rgyas, 1889–1967). He married twice. Wangdrak (1925–1988) was the son of his first wife, while Ngawang Norbu (Ngag dbang nor bu) was the son of his second. He came from a family of painters who had worked for many generations in Shekar.

Khepa Tshering Topgye worked as overseer (*dbu chen*) or sub-overseer (*dbu chung*) at the main renovations in western Tsang during the 1930s and 1940s: of Jung Riwoche (lCung Ri bo che), Gyang Bummoche (rGyang 'Bum mo che), and the Great Temple (Lha khang chen mo) in southern Sakya. On all three occasions the central government requisitioned painters from all sixteen districts (*rdzong*) of Tsang.<sup>82</sup> He served as one of the junior overseers (*dbu chung*) at the renovation of Gyang Bummoche Stupa in the early 1930s. A few years later at the restoration of Jung Riwoche Monastery (around 1936, following damage from an earthquake) he served alternately as main overseer and sub-overseer (*dbu chen* and *dbu chung*). During the restoration of the Great Temple of Sakya (in the mid-1940s),

he served as *tshon gnyer*, the artist in charge of preparing paints and other necessary supplies.<sup>83</sup> During the renovation of Sakya Lhakhang Chenmo, Wangdrak and Ngawang Norbu did not assist their father. They worked elsewhere, painting a Kangyur chapel (bKa' 'gyur lha khang) for the treasurer of the Porong chieftain at Namkhok Drachen (Nam khog sBra chen) in a nomadic district near Porong.<sup>84</sup>

The Sherpa painter Akhu or A'u Lekshe (A'u Legs bshad)—also called Gechung (Little Monk) Ngawang Legshe (dGe chung Ngag dbang legs bshad)—studied briefly under Tshering Topgye and extensively under other painters in Tibet.<sup>85</sup> During the 1950s there were only six painters from Shekar: three from Tshering Topgye's family, two from the Chidu Gangpa (Byi du sgang pa) family, and one monk of Shekar Monastery.<sup>86</sup>

Shekar Wangdrak's younger brother was the artist Ngawang Norbu of Shekar (b. 1936). He first learned painting from his father, beginning at age eleven. Wangdrak had begun painting much earlier, going as a boy to the restoration of Jung Riwoche to assist his father. Their other siblings did not learn painting. Ngawang Norbu worked together with his father and brother until he was given as an adoptive groom (*mag pa*) to another family in Dingri. As a monk, Wangdrak never married but continued to paint with his father. His father finally retired and died in India at the Tibetan refugee settlement of Manipat, where Wangdrak lived with his father in the late 1960s. Figure 3.9 shows Wangdrak, a refugee artist at the Mainpat settlement in Madhya Pradesh, in 1968 or 1969, painting a *thangka* of twenty-one Tārās.<sup>87</sup>

Ngawang Norbu confirmed that his family followed an Üri or Eri painting style. The family maintained typical Ü artist slang, such as saying a good painting was "*ri mo sbyangs sha thon pa*,





FIG. 3.9  
Wangdrak of Shekar in Mainpat, Madhya Pradesh, India  
After: *Tibetans in Exile 1959–1969* (Dharamsala, 1969), between pp. 176 and 177: “Wangda, a Tibetan Sehore-painter at work in Mainpat.”

“the painting demonstrates expertise.”<sup>88</sup> The more usual expression in the local western-Tsang dialect would have been *ri mo shugs chen po*, which literally means “a powerful painting.”

In the second main town of Tsang, Gyantse, some artists followed the Tashilhunpo tradition, while others followed Lhasa Eri traditions (as in Shekar). Other places in western Tsang with painters included Lhatse (Lha rtse) and Ngamring (Ngam ring)—the latter had just a few artists. The best painters in Tsang Province were usually considered to be those of Tashilhunpo. But for proportions of sacred images, the artists of Tsedong (rTse gdong) in central Tsang had the best reputation in Tsang for correctness.<sup>89</sup>

Wangdrak of Shekar stated that the palette of the early-twentieth-century Lhasa Eri was overall much lighter than the Tsang style of Tashilhunpo (the New Menri). For the base color of clouds, Eri artists often used only bluish

and greenish white, whereas red- and orange-tinged clouds were also common possibilities for Tashilhunpo artists. Üri artists preferred perfectly balanced compositions compared to Tashilhunpo artists’ preference for asymmetry.<sup>90</sup> The two traditions also differed in small details. Eri artists typically spaced the five skulls or the golden *rigs-linga* elements on the head ornaments of deities very evenly. By contrast, Tashilhunpo artists would place the three central ones closely together with a wider gap between the two outside ones.<sup>91</sup>

That last difference can be verified by comparing Wangdrak’s or Legdrup Gyatsho’s drawings of head ornaments with those by a representative artist from Tashilhunpo (Kachen Losang Phüntshok). Figures 3.10 and 3.11 show the different spacing of the jewel elements in the diadem of the peaceful deity Amitāyus.

The same distinction can be noted when we compare three versions of the diadem of the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, twice with evenly spaced jewels of the Eri (Figs. 3.12 and 3.14) and once (Fig. 3.13) with the distinctive 1-3-1 grouping of the Tsangri.

Many similar examples of the spacing of the five skull ornaments can also be found in Kachen Losang Phüntshok’s painting manual.<sup>92</sup> Their distinctive 1-3-1 arrangement of jewels or skulls is typical of the Tsangri of Tashilhunpo. Nevertheless, I could find a special case where an artist from Tsang did not follow it, at least not in proportions of statues of peaceful bodhisattvas. Figure 3.15 demonstrates that the Tsedong artisan Penpa Dorje followed an even spacing of the jewels, and not the Tashilhunpo spacing. But leaving aside that as a special case possibly meant as a standard model for sculpture, it was more widespread for artists of Tsang (of both painting and sculpture) to cluster together the front three elements of head ornaments.

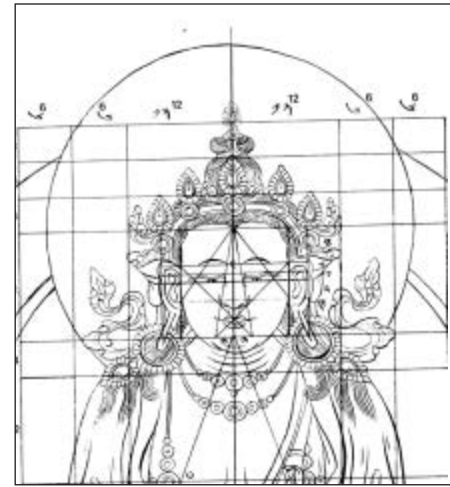


FIG. 3.10  
Diadem of Amitāyus with evenly spaced jewels  
Drawn by an exponent of the Eri style, Wangdrak of Shekar  
After: D. Jackson 1984, p. 58.



FIG. 3.11  
Diadem of Amitāyus with the middle three jewels clustered together  
Drawn by an exponent of the Tsangri style of Tashilhunpo, Kachen Losang Phüntshok  
After: Kachen Losang Phüntshok 1993, p. 77.





FIG. 3.12  
Diadem of Vajrapāṇi with evenly spaced  
jewels  
Drawn by a painter of the Eri style from Ü  
Province, Legdrup Gyatsho  
After: Thubten Legshe Gyatsho 1979, p. 71.



FIG. 3.14  
Diadem of Vajrapāṇi with evenly spaced  
jewels  
Drawn by a painter from Tsang who  
followed the Eri style, Wangdrak of Shekar  
After: D. Jackson 1984, p. 61.

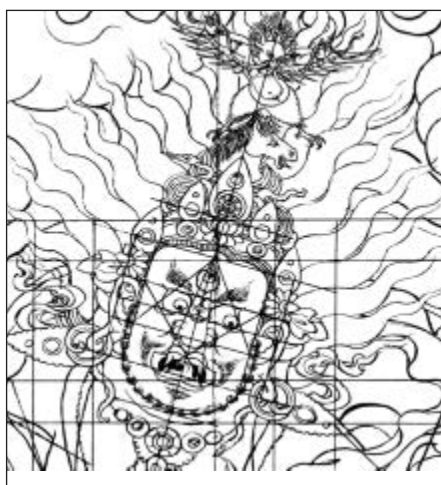


FIG. 3.13  
Diadem of Vajrapāṇi with the middle three  
jewels clustered together  
Drawn by a painter of the Tsangri style from  
Tashilhunpo, Kachen Losang Phüntshok  
After: Kachen Losang Phüntshok 1993, p.  
70 (rTa phyag khyung gsum).

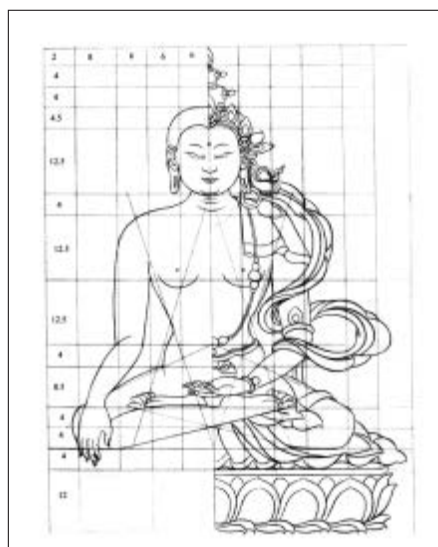


FIG. 3.15  
Jewel Diadem of a Peaceful Bodhisattva  
Drawn by Tsedong Penpa Dorje  
After: Tsedong Penpa Dorje 2001, p. 238.

## MENRI STYLES IN Ü PROVINCE DIFFERENT FROM THE ERI

Menri Paintings from the Time of the  
Fifth through Eighth Dalai Lamas (ca.  
1650–1800)

Though the Eri dominated Ü  
Province in the last two centuries,  
before then, during the times of the  
Fifth through Eighth Dalai Lamas,  
quite different Menri styles flourished  
there. Indeed, paintings similar to the  
Tsangri or New Menri styles inspired by  
Chöying Gyatsho were commissioned  
in Lhasa for a few generations after the  
founding of the Ganden Phodrang (dGa'  
ldan pho brang) theocracy during the  
times of the Fifth through Eighth or even  
the Ninth Dalai Lamas (ca. 1640s–  
1800), until they were supplanted by the  
Eri style by about the early nineteenth  
century.

Gilles Béguin identified a New  
Menri style of late-seventeenth-century  
Ü, specifying that it ceased to exist after  
about 1750.<sup>93</sup> But he did not have access  
to the recently discovered *thangkas*  
linked with the Eighth and Ninth Dalai  
Lamas (such as Figs. 3.17 and 3.19). He  
also did not indicate this stylistic discon-  
tinuity in the chart he had adapted from  
J. Huntington.<sup>94</sup>

Figures 4.6 and 4.7 exemplify a  
court painting from the period of the  
Desi Sanggye Gyatsho. Since that sumptu-  
ous set is from Potala Palace, I first  
assumed it to be an example of Ü-based  
painting. But based on the dark blue sky,  
the clouds, placement of minor figures,  
and spacing of head ornaments, it seems  
rather to be in a Tsangri style; I now  
assume it was painted by a great Tsangi  
style painter who flourished in the Desi's  
time (ca. 1670s–1705).

Relevant murals that survive from  
that period include the following: the  
upper chapel in the Lukhang from the  
Sixth Dalai Lama's time; the Bodhgaya  
section of the Potala Löläng chapel  
(Blos blang lha khang) from the Sev-  
enth Dalai Lama's time; and the lower



(Kālacakra) chapel in the Lukhang from the Eighth Dalai Lama's time. In about the early nineteenth century those previous Menri styles came to an end and were replaced by the E-district based Old Menri style, the Eri. But where did that come from?

Figure 3.16 illustrates what I hoped might be a painting from Ü Province in the mid-eighteenth century, the period of the Seventh Dalai Lama Kalsang Gyatsho (bsKal bzang rgya mtsho, 1708–1757). It depicts the Seventh Dalai Lama and is the final painting in a set portraying his previous lives. I first assumed it to be an example of the Üri, based on its light blue sky. But other key stylistic details such as the clouds, placement of minor figures, and spacing of head ornaments reveal it to be in either in the Tsangri (though here with a distinctly lighter sky than normal) or in a closely allied New Menri tradition based in Ü Province.

When we look at just the sky and clouds, we note the unusual dark shading behind the three-lobed clouds without shaded recesses fringing the horizon—here just the upper edge of a grassy hill—those clouds look just like the typical eighteenth-century Tsangri clouds of Tashilhunpo (as in Figs. 4.8 and 4.9). Above them, except for the two larger deities (Yamāntaka and Tārā), all the lamas and divinities float in the air, hovering above masses of still another type of clouds. These have four different pale base colors (including pastel pink); three of the cloud clusters have snake-like tails that undulate upward.

One immediately recognizable feature is the dark scalloped outer edges: the edges are a classic cloud border consisting of three strips of colors that become gradually lighter progressing inward: dark indigo blue, light blue, and light green. We can call it a dark scalloped cloud lining of three colors. (Legdrup Gyatsho called it *phing bris*.)<sup>95</sup> The technique is a bit like the unshaded



color gradation called *tsho sha dkar* that is used in Tibetan decorative painting.<sup>96</sup> See also the same lining of the cloud fringe of Vaiśravaṇa, below left. (We shall see that same cloud lining in several subsequent paintings in this chapter and in such early New Menri paintings as Fig. 4.4 and Fig. 4.6.)

Figure 3.17 offers itself as a possible example of Ü Province painting from the late eighteenth century. Although it

FIG. 3.16  
Portrait of the Seventh Dalai Lama,  
completing a set portraying his previous  
lives  
Tibet; mid-18th century  
29 7/8 x 19 7/8 in. (76 x 50.5 cm)  
The Palace Museum, Beijing, China  
Literature: The Palace Museum 1992,  
*Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism*  
*Collected in the Qing Palace*, p. 31, no. 9;  
and D. Jackson 2005a, fig. 4.



portrays the Third (sometimes counted as the Sixth) Panchen Lama, who is here called “the Omniscient Losang Palden Yeshe,” it is by no means painted in the Tsangri style. Like Figure 3.16, the portrait of the Seventh Dalai Lama that survives in a Qing imperial temple in Beijing, the skies here are markedly lighter than the typical Tsangri skies. The painting lacks snowy mountains, and the jewel ornaments or skulls on the heads of its minor deities are evenly spaced.

Unfortunately, Rigdzin Dorje et al., the authors of the *Bod kyi thang ka* catalog, did not identify in their entry any of the minor figures though all have inscribed names beneath them. Looking at the published plate with a magnifying glass, I could make out that the second to last lama was a “great abbot of Sakya Monastery” (Sa skya mKhan chen). The final lama, seated in a gesture of reverent supplication (and hence probably the patron of the painting), turns out to be none other than the Eighth Dalai Lama Jampal Gyatsho. (The inscription seems to be: *rje btsun blo bzang 'jam dpal rgya mtsho*.) That figure is crucial for establishing the painting’s provenance (Lhasa, Eighth Dalai Lama’s court) and period (ca. 1770s–1804). The head jewels of the ornaments are evenly spaced (as in the later Eri), and no snow mountains are found. It is one of the few *thangkas* from Ü that would fit as a stylistic intermediary between the eighteenth-century Menri of Ü and the Eri.

By contrast, Figure 3.18 could not serve as a stylistic intermediary. It clearly exemplifies in its coloring and shading of clouds a non-Eri painting style of the late eighteenth century. (Its uncertain classification mainly derives from the lack of dark blue sky of the contemporaneous Tsang style.) This painting from the Palace Museum, Beijing, was identified by Akya Losang Tenpe Gyaltshen (A kyā Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1708–1768) for the Chinese emperor in 1763 and hence



dates to the 1760s. When we examine it more closely, we find the head ornaments of the main figure and two figures below all have the 1-3-1 spacing of the Tsangri. So the painting would seem to be either in a Tsangri painting style with lighter than normal skies or a New Menri of Ü that has retained Tsangri-like head ornaments. Based on the iconography, the lama above the head of the main deity seems to be the Seventh Dalai Lama.

FIG. 3.17  
The Third Panchen Lama Palden Yeshe  
Lhasa, Tibet; 1770–1804  
37  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 24  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (96 x 62 cm)  
After: Rig ‘dzin rdo rje et al. 1985, *Bod kyi thang ka*, no. 80.





FIG. 3.18  
Vijayā (Namgyalma)  
Tibet; 1750s or early 1760s (before 1763)  
26  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 18  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (67 x 46 cm)  
Preserved in The Palace Museum, Beijing, China  
After: The Palace Museum 1999, *Cultural Relics*, no. 19-1.

The upper third of the painting features clouds of two distinctive types: the sloping banks of clouds on both sides with saw-tooth edges. The upper bank consists of carefully shaded stratocumulus clouds. The lower bank of clouds is distinctive thanks to its undulating dark outline and internal shading of each tooth. Here the scalloped three-color cloud lining is used for dentate clouds, which is quite rare to see. On either side the outer edges of two clouds are

a scalloped dark indigo; otherwise a lighter blue border is used.

The style of Figure 3.19 puzzles me. I previously identified it as a high court style of probably nineteenth-century Lhasa.<sup>97</sup> My working hypothesis, based on the *thangka*'s generally light color scheme, is that this portrait would represent a continuation of the New Menri or Mensar (sMan gsar) of Ü Province into the period of the Eighth Dalai Lama.<sup>98</sup> This is a portrait of the Eighth Dalai Lama (1758–1804). The two lamas above him are his tutor Yeshe Gyaltsen (1713–1793, upper right) and the Sixth or Third Panchen Lama Losang Palden Yeshe (upper left). It is thus linked with both Tashilhunpo and the Dalai Lama.

The sky is a dazzling tour-de-force that includes all the Tashilhunpo New Menri cloud types that we saw above in Figures 3.16 and 3.18 and will see again in Figure 3.20. The base colors of the clouds around Buddha Śākyamuni at top center are more colorful than normal, combining two different colors in the same cloud: blue and red, along with green and yellow. The dark scalloped cloud lining of three or four colors is well executed, as is the same cloud fringe below around two of the four guardian deities near the outer edge in the bottom register. The highly ornate decorative vegetal throne-back encroaches on the central figure's head nimbus. The same fringe of daisylike white-petalled, yellow-anther flowers and clusters of pomegranate-shaped auspicious fruits continues upward into the sky to fringe the top-central Buddha. (The fruits are reminiscent of the aegle tree fruit [Tib. *bil ba*].)<sup>99</sup> The same white-petaled, yellow-centered flowers appear in Figure 3.16. (Compare also Fig. 3.24, and *Bod kyi thang ka*, no. 52, 'Brom ston.)

Another beautiful but unusual touch is the net (*dra ba*) of decorative jewels hanging down into the central figure's







FIG. 3.19

The Eighth Dalai Lama Jampal Gyatsho  
Tibet; 1770–1804

35  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 24  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (90 x 61.5 cm)

Collection R.R.E.

Literature: D. Jackson 1996, pl. 67; and  
Derek Maher 2005 in M. Brauen ed. 2005,  
fig. 80.

head nimbus, its edge partially obscured by the tip of the main figure's pointed yellow hat. (A similar network of hanging jewels will be seen in the central head nimbus of Fig. 4.14, HAR 94400.)

According to the catalog entry by Rigdzin Dorje et al., Figure 3.20 was painted during the period of the Seventh Dalai Lama (1708–1757). It could also date a little later, to a decade or two after his death. The lamas pictured above are the Seventh Dalai Lama (Kalsang Gyatsho) and the Sixth (or Third) Panchen Rinpoche Losang Palden Yeshe (1738–1780).

Note the rich variety and dramatic deployment of several types of clouds. Those behind the mountains fringing the horizon (including one snowy peak to the left) are typical eighteenth-century Tsangri clouds of Tashilhunpo (as in Figs. 4.8 and 4.9). Below the two right and left lamas, we find three-lobed Menri clouds without any shaded recesses. All three lamas are fringed with clouds of still another type. Four different base colors are used (including faint pink), while their outer edges are made of the classic scalloped outer strip of three strips of colors: dark indigo blue, light blue, and light green. (We saw them in Fig. 3.16 and will again in such early New Menri paintings as Fig. 4.4 and—around the central figure—Fig. 4.6. Eri painters commonly used this treatment around the clouds surrounding the four guardians of the directions.)

Figures 3.21 and 3.22 can both be dated more securely than the preceding *thangka*. Both are original murals of the Tshepak Lhakhang chapel in Potala



Palace, painted in 1804 or 1805, soon after the death of the Eighth Dalai Lama (1758–1804). The dark blue skies are very different from those in the Eri, and I think the murals were painted by a painter of the Tsangri. Phüntso Tsheten et al. call both paintings “New Menri Tradition” (*sman gsar lugs*) in the captions.<sup>100</sup> Note the banks of clouds with “saw-tooth” edges.

In Figure 3.23, the lower part is the original mural, dating to 1804 (like

FIG. 3.20

Palden Lhamo

Tibet; mid-18th century

44  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 29  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (113 x 75 cm)

After: Rig ‘dzin rdo rje et al. 1985, *Bod kyi thang ka*, no. 119.





FIG. 3.21  
Potala Mural from the Period of the Eighth  
Dalai Lama  
Detail, Tshepak Lhakhang  
Potala Palace, Potala, Lhasa, Tibet;  
1804–1805  
Literature: Phun tshogs tshe brtan et al.  
comps. 2000, *A Mirror of the Murals in the  
Potala*, p. 156.  
It is called “sman gsar lugs” in its caption.



FIG. 3.22  
Potala Mural from the Period of the Eighth  
Dalai Lama  
Detail, Tshepak Lhakhang  
Potala Palace, Potala, Lhasa, Tibet;  
1804–1805  
Literature: Phun tshogs tshe brtan et al.  
comps. 2000, *A Mirror of the Murals in the  
Potala*, p. 157. “sman gsar lugs”

Figs. 3.21 and 3.22). Above that, most of the upper half is the work by Eri artists who repainted much of that palace in the 1920s. The newer part is immediately discernible thanks to the light green color of the background grassy meadow. Note, in particular, the typical Eri three-lobed cumulus clouds (with a dark central recess) behind the red-hat pandit in the center repainted area.

#### OTHER PAINTINGS NOT IN THE ERI

Figure 3.24 depicts the Eighth Dalai Lama Jampal Gyatsho (as in Fig. 3.20). The ten figures surrounding him include two lamas (presumably his personal gurus), and several tantric or protective deities. The overall composition is balanced. The medium blue sky at the top gradually lightens approaching the horizon, though still remaining a pale medium blue. The clouds around the two gurus are not those of the later Eri. They are made of strips of green, light blue, and dark blue lines with a scalloped outer edge that was also known to the Eri but more commonly used for





FIG. 3.23  
Potala Mural from the Period of the Eighth  
Dalai Lama  
Detail, Tshepak Lhakhang  
Potala Palace, Potala, Lhasa, Tibet; 1804–  
1805 and 1920s  
Literature: Phun tshogs tshe brtan et al.  
comps. 2000, *A Mirror of the Murals in the  
Potala*, p. 155. “sman gsar lugs”

clouds surrounding the four directional guardians, especially in murals. In fact, those same scalloped-fringed clouds are also used to frame Vaiśravaṇa, below. As in Figure 3.17, the painting lacks snowy mountains, but the head ornaments and skulls on the minor deities seem to follow the 1-3-1 spacing.

Figure 3.25 depicts the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Losang Gyatsho (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617–1682) with his hagiography. Forming part of a very large set, this exquisite painting tells the story of his life in fourteen episodes. It was meant to be hung within its set as the twelfth *thangka* to the left of center and hence was twenty-third overall in the set.<sup>101</sup> The narrative begins at the top left with his miraculous descent from a heavenly pure land and entering his mother’s womb (in Chonggye in southern Ü) attended by many auspicious signs such as a rain shower from a cloudless sky, followed by his birth in the fire-snake year (1617).<sup>102</sup> The episodes continue around the main figure counterclockwise. The last episodes (above right) show him manifesting during a retreat in Potala Palace as something birdlike, slightly smaller than a crow, and then passing away to divine realms such as the Copper-Colored Mountain (of Padmasambhava).<sup>103</sup> (The spiritual intensity of both great events is highlighted visually through a rounded rainbow around the two earthly locales filled with a radiance of golden light. (Captions in gold lettering, here partly abraded, record each episode, and they need to be confirmed using detailed biographies.)

As a detailed narrative painting, the composition comprises landscapes with depictions of numerous monasteries. Hence it is not as suitable for stylistic comparison as a more purely iconic representation might be. But it is a very fine work of art, perhaps painted by a court artist of one of the later Dalai Lamas.

Judging by the sky and clouds, it seems to be an Ü Province painting of





FIG. 3.24  
The Eighth Dalai Lama Jampal Gyatsho  
Ü Province, Tibet; late 18th or early 19th  
century  
25 x 16  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (63.5 x 41.5 cm)  
Essen collection, Museum der Kulturen,  
Basel (Inv. no. IId13820)  
Photograph by Hans Meyer-Veden  
© Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland  
(HAR 3313820)  
Literature: G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo,  
no. II-270.





FIG. 3.25  
 The Fifth Dalai with Episodes from His Life  
 Ü Province, Tibet; 18th century  
 33 x 21 7/8 in. (83.8 x 54.9 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2003.9.2 (HAR 65275)







FIG. 3.26

The Fifth Dalai Lama with Previous Lives  
Tsang Province, Tibet; 19th century?  
Cloth, silk thread, pigment, wood, and cord  
132 x 77 in. (73 x 45 cm)  
Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology,  
American Museum of Natural History (acc.  
no. 70.2/ 867)  
(HAR 94395)

about the eighteenth century, though it is certainly not in the Eri style. The spacing of the head ornaments is difficult to determine since it lacks a main figure wearing them. (The study of other surviving paintings of the set should help clarify its stylistic affiliation.)

Figure 3.26 lacks the baroque New Menri clouds and decorative details of Figures 3.16, 3.18, 3.19, and 3.20. Still, it is even more problematic as a painting from Ü Province. It also depicts the Fifth Dalai Lama as subject (as seen in Fig. 3.25). An established iconographic theme during his time was to surround him by eminent religious and historical figures from India and Tibet, representing the series of his own previous lives. The figure at top left is Khyiu Dawa (Khyi'u zla ba).

Though clearly a painting in the Menri from about the same time with similar principal figure as Figure 3.25, it is stylistically very different in comparison. In some respects, it is reminiscent of Tsang painting styles. Though the composition is balanced, a few landscape elements are not. The minor figures are mostly portrayed in profile, and the clouds are not at all like those used in the later Eri. It is difficult to classify because if it is a Tsang Menri style, it is also certainly not in the typical Tsangri style of Tashilhunpo.

#### MINOR PAINTING STYLES IN Ü PROVINCE

At least five minor painting styles existed in Ü Province in the last two or

three centuries, two belonging to the Menri and three not. Two non-Menri styles were patronized by the Karma Kagyu and Drigung Kagyu sects at their main seats of Tshurphu and Drigung. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Khyenri also existed as a rare non-Menri minor tradition in Lhokha in southern Ü, near its main historical seat, Gongkar Monastery.<sup>104</sup> In addition, other Menri provincial styles (such as the Tsangri and Kham Menri) were also occasionally practiced in Ü by painters visiting from Tsang and Kham.

#### *The Drigung Painting Style in Ü Province*

Figure 3.27 embodies the Drigung style, one of three two non-Menri minor painting traditions of Ü Province. Its recent adherents assert that it was historically independent of the Eri and New Menri of Tsang. At first glance this *thangka* seems to be a later provincial Menri style, but it certainly does not closely follow either the Eri or Tsangri. The arrangement of the divine figures and landscape is mostly symmetrical, only the blue-green crag to the right of the main figure is not balanced by something on the other side. All three of the main human figures (gurus) are depicted in partial profile.

The sky is filled with clouds rarely or never seen in Menri paintings. An elegant border of yet another cloud type frames the throne of the main figure. Instead of the three-lobed clouds, we have a series of single-lobed clouds of different base colors and with one shaded recess. The upper sky has a grayish base color and is filled with a series of dentate clouds whose borders and gaps are rendered with indigo. This Drigung painting features inscriptions that name the individual gurus. The second and third lamas are Rigdzin Chödrak (Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa, twenty-third abbot of Drigung, 1595–1659) and Könchok Trinle Sangpo (dKon mchog phrin

las bzang po, 1656–1719). (For more on the Drigung style, see chapter 7, Figs. 7.13–7.17.)

#### FIVE POINTS OF COMPARISON

When comparing Menri paintings from central Tibet, it may help to focus at first on five points. Most of these were identified to me in the 1980s by the painter Wangdrak of Shekar.<sup>105</sup> As a painter from a minor style in Tsang, he was in a good position to notice such differences. Let us concentrate on paintings of peaceful (*zhi ba*) main figures using the full-pigment (*rdzogs tshon*) technique. Three of the five criteria relate to landscape details, which by the early seventeenth century had been universally adopted in Tibetan painting.

These stylistic points should be checked when comparing paintings in the recent Menri styles of Ü (the Eri) and Tsang, especially at Tashilhunpo. (Some of these points may also prove useful when comparing Menri paintings of peaceful deities from locales outside central Tibet.) The five are:<sup>106</sup>

1. Symmetry of composition
2. Color and shading of skies
3. Shape and color of clouds, and whether outlined
4. Presence of snow mountains in landscape
5. Spacing of elements within the head ornaments of deities

To ascertain the symmetry of composition, we need to ask whether the overall composition (i.e., the arrangement of sacred figures and major landscape elements) was balanced along the central vertical axis. Üri style (Eri) painters favored balanced compositions, while painters in the Tsangri did not. (It may help to differentiate symmetrical placement of divine figures from symmetrical arrangement of landscape elements.)







Regarding the color and shading of skies: Are the skies in general dark blue, light blue, or something in between? When we can look at the original painting or a good photograph, do we find that the base color of the sky is dark blue, medium blue, or white? On that basis, is much or just a little (indigo) shading applied?

Regarding the clouds: Were they painted with distinctive shapes or colors? Üri painters almost always employed stylized three-lobed cumulus with a darkly shaded hole in the center that artists called the “cloud-eye” (*sprin mig*). Secondly, such clouds were always painted with base colors of pale blue and

green, but rarely the other two possible cloud colors (pale pink and orange). The Tsangri painters preferred clouds of other shapes; they more commonly painted them shades of pink or pastel orange, in addition to pale blue and green.

Regarding snow mountains: Do peaks jut up on the landscape horizon? Many Tashilhunpo and Tsang painters were fond of including glacier peaks, often on the horizon of one side of the landscape, and sometimes on both sides. Such glacier peaks were rarely depicted by Üri painters.

Regarding head ornaments of deities: Are they made up of five evenly spaced elements? Or are the middle

three elements grouped more closely together? According to Wangdrak, the head ornaments of deities—the five jewel ornaments symbolizing the “Five Buddha Family” (*rigs lnga*) on the heads of deities and the five skulls on the heads of tantric deities—painters from Lhasa typically spaced all five elements evenly. Tashilhunpo artists, by contrast, placed the three central skulls close together, leaving a wider gap between the two outside ones. (See Figs. 3.10–3.14.)

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FIG. 3.27 (opposite page)  
Drigung Kyobpa Jigten Sumgön  
Ü Province (or a Drigung monastery outside  
of Ü Province), Tibet; 18th century  
6  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 4  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (17.1 x 12.1 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.555 (HAR 1034)







TSANG PROVINCE is the second main province in the heartland of Tibet. As the western part of central Tibet, it could rightly be called west-central Tibet. At times, it provided the seat of the Tibetan capital, as during the Sakya-Yuan and Rinpung periods. It is culturally and artistically highly distinguished; its artists could and can vie with the best from any province. It was home in recent centuries to two nationally renowned centers of Buddhist art, Shigatse (Tashilhunpo) and Tsedong.

Tashilhunpo Monastery and Shigatse fort and town lay near the center of Tsang Province, at the confluence of the Brahmaputra and Nyang Rivers. Much of the province is divided east to west by the Brahmaputra River. Sakya, Lhatse, and Shekar all lay in western Tsang. The eastern border of Tsang lies at the eastern edge of Nyemo county, the home of mines that produced the highly prized copper pigments “Tsang azurite blue” (*gtsang mthing*) and “Tsang malachite green” (*gtsang spang*). Some artists used to say: “Though gold is the highest among jewels and precious metals, malachite and azurite are first among types of gold.”<sup>107</sup>

#### THE TSANGRI AT TASHILHUNPO, SUCCESSOR TO CHÖYING GYATSHO’S NEW MENRI

The most prominent painting style of Tsang in recent centuries was the

Tsangri, the style maintained by the successors to the New Menri of Tsangpa Chöying Gyatsho, especially at Tashilhunpo. Two outstanding contemporary painters of this school have published painting manuals that feature color illustrations.<sup>108</sup> Some typical earlier examples of the Tsang style have also been published from Ladakhi collections (though not identified as such).<sup>109</sup>

Most Geluk monks from Ladakh received higher scholastic training at Tashilhunpo, their mother monastery (Tib. *gdan sa*). This gave rise to other cultural links including artistic ones. Tashilhunpo also had important connections with certain Geluk lamas and monasteries in Kham and Amdo.

The Tsangri has been virtually ignored by some of the most reputed Western students of Tibetan art history, who never learned to discriminate it from the Eri style in Ü.<sup>110</sup> This art-historical blind spot owes its existence in part to the general preoccupation of previous scholars with pre-sixteenth-century paintings, but it need not continue. Some of the upper-floor chapels of the holiest Tibetan shrine, Jokhang Cathedral in Lhasa, has in recent decades been painted by Kachen Losang Phüntshok of Tashilhunpo, one of the Tsang-style school’s most brilliant living exponents. It would be a travesty to identify those Tsang-style murals as examples of their arch-rival school, the Eri, simply because they were painted in Lhasa and in Ü.

#### COMPARABLE MURALS IN Ü PROVINCE

Quite a few murals of major temples in Lhasa during the lives of the Sixth through Eighth Dalai Lamas (i.e., the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries)—including the chapels of Potala Palace and the Lukhang temple—were originally painted in the Tsangri or a very similar style. If we take their solid dark blue skies, spacing of head ornaments, and shading of clouds to be decisive, these were all painted in the New Menri style that Chöying Gyatsho established. But were they painted by New Menri painters from Tsang (i.e., Tsangri) who were called to Ü Province? Or were they painted by painters from Ü who had learned that style but resided in Lhasa or nearby in Ü? However we answer that question, we are still confronted by the dominance of Ü Province at the highest levels by the New Menri style (and not by the Eri Old Menri). It is hard to avoid the conclusion that until the early nineteenth century, Ü Province was dominated by a Tsangri-like style.

#### DATABLE MURALS IN Ü PROVINCE

Among the original murals in Lhasa that escaped being repainted in the renovations during the time of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, we could list:

Fifth Dalai Lama. Potala, 1645–1648. (Only small parts of the original Eastern Assembly Hall and Western Residence chamber

Detail of Fig. 4.5



survive.) (See Figs. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.)

Sixth Dalai Lama. Lukhang upper floor, 1700.<sup>111</sup>

Seventh Dalai Lama. Potala, Lölång Chapel (Blos blang lha khang). (A small part survived: the Vajrāsana section was one of the only sections not repainted.)

Eighth Dalai Lama. Lukhang, Shambhala king murals in lower floor, 1791.<sup>112</sup>

Eighth Dalai Lama. Potala, Red Palace, Tshepak Chapel (Tshe dpag lha khang), 1804–05. (Only a small section near the window survives. See Figs. 3.21–3.23.)

#### EARLY NEW MENRI MURALS

Murals painted by the Tsangri school's founder, Chöying Gyatsho, survive in two chapels of White Palace within Potala Palace. In both cases just fragments of the original murals survive. The first is in the Eastern Assembly Hall (Tshoms chen shar), and a few areas that were probably covered by a large shrine

FIG. 4.1  
King Nyatri Tsenpo, First Tibetan King,  
Descending from the Sky  
Mural detail, painted by Tsangpa Chöying  
Gyatsho  
Eastern Assembly Hall, White Palace,  
Potala, Lhasa, Tibet; 1645–1648  
Literature: Phun tshogs tshe brtan et al.  
comps. 2000, *A Mirror of the Murals in the  
Potala*, p. 55; and D. Jackson 2005a, fig. 2.

FIG. 4.2  
King Nyatri Tsenpo, First Tibetan King,  
Carried on the Shoulders of Shepherds  
Mural detail, painted by Tsangpa Chöying  
Gyatsho  
Eastern Assembly Hall, White Palace,  
Potala, Lhasa, Tibet; 1645–1648  
Literature: Phun tshogs tshe brtan et al.  
comps. 2000, *A Mirror of the Murals in the  
Potala*, p. 56.





during the renovation in the 1920s. (See Figs. 4.1 and 4.2.)

The main figures in this chapel in the Eastern Assembly Hall represent the previous lives of the Fifth Dalai Lama. The minor figures between those figures depict episodes of early Tibetan history and legend. Figure 4.1 depicts King Nyatri Tsenpo, the legendary first king of Tibet, descending from the sky. Though painted in Lhasa, these can be counted as prototypes of the Tsangri (and not Üri) style. Note the solid dark-blue skies and the frequent occurrence, in general, of Chinese golden pagoda roofs in Chöying Gyatsho's landscapes, here atop mythical early Tibetan royal palaces. (Those ornate, perfectly executed roofs imply that the artist based many such elements on Chinese originals.)

In a previous publication, I originally described Figure 4.1 as an “Example of the earliest Tsangri (New Menri) style.”<sup>113</sup> That caption was edited during publication to read “Example of the earliest Lhasa style,” precisely what I did not want to assert. That editorial “correction” is a good example of the fallacy of “a famous present domicile



FIG. 4.3  
The Tale of the Buddha sending a Painting to Mukṭālatā  
Mural detail, painted by Tsang pa Chöying Gyatsho  
Western Residence, White Palace, Potala, Lhasa, Tibet; 1645–1648  
After: Phun tshogs tshe brtan et al. comps. 2000, *A Mirror of the Murals in the Potala*, p. 221.



FIG. 4.4  
The Buddha's Descent from the Heavens  
Mural detail, painted by Tsang pa Chöying Gyatsho  
Western Residence, White Palace, Potala, Lhasa, Tibet; 1645–1648  
After: Phun tshogs tshe brtan et al. comps. 2000, *A Mirror of the Murals in the Potala*, p. 222.



implies that it came from there,” which I committed in the next caption to Figure 3. (That other painting survived in Potala Palace, so I assumed it to be in an Ü Province court style.)

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 depict details from other murals by Chöying Gyatsho in Potala Palace. These are found in an alcove in the back wall of the small Western Residence (Nub brgyud gzims chung) Chapel. The main subject here is the hundred and eight Moral Tales (*Avadānakalpalatā*) of Kṣemendra. In Figure 4.3 the subject is a famous episode of traditional Buddhist art history. It tells the story of the princess of Langka named Muktālātā (Tib. Mu tig ‘khri shing) who sent envoys with a letter to the Buddha, to whom the Buddha when replying sent a painting of himself.

Figure 4.4 depicts several other episodes of the same series of Buddhist moral tales and the life of the Buddha. The central theme is the Buddha visiting the realm of the gods to teach his deceased mother and his subsequent descent from the gods (*lha ’bab*). Here the Buddha is shown walking down a middle golden ladder, with gods accompanying him to his right and left. A chain of beautifully painted cloud-wreathed, snow-covered mountains separates these episodes from the scenes (of Tibetan history?) below. Note the solid dark-blue sky above.

One scholar asserted that the founder of the New Menri in Tsang, Chöying Gyatsho, was “primarily used for the wall paintings and various paintings and *thangkas* sponsored by the Fifth Dalai Lama and his teacher the Panchen Lama.”<sup>114</sup> This is misleading, since Chöying Gyatsho was known to have painted only once in Lhasa or Ü Province (working on these very Potala murals in 1645–1648), but otherwise painted exclusively in his native province, Tsang, mostly at Tashilhunpo. Similarly, the earlier founder of the original Menri, Menthangpa Menla

Döndrup (sMan bla don grub) though born in Lhodrak in southern Ü, is not recorded to have painted for the First Dalai Lama in Lhasa or elsewhere in Ü. His only recorded murals (and writings), which date to the mid-fifteenth century, were executed in Tsang.<sup>115</sup>

#### TSANGRI THANGKAS

As I summarized at the end of chapter 3, the typical features for the Tsangri style of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries included: dark-blue skies, clouds with special shading, and head ornaments with the front three jewels or skulls clustered together. According to Wangdrak of Shekar, painters of the Tsang-based New Menri, or Tsangri, were fond of asymmetrical compositions and showing humans in partial profile. Their background landscapes sometimes included snow-capped peaks to one side, a rarity in the Üri style. They did not depict the usual Eri clouds. They had special ways of shading the two types of clouds: those floating in the sky (here painted mauve/pink) and those clinging to the sides or tops of hills in their landscapes. Note also the use of pink clouds in both.<sup>116</sup>

Figure 4.5, a painting of Buddha Śākyamuni, is an excellent example of a New Menri style subsequent to Chöying Gyatsho. Based purely on its style I would attribute it to Tsang (probably Tashilhunpo) and date it to the late seventeenth or eighteenth century. There is no need to add “or eastern Tibet” to its provenance.<sup>117</sup> The central figure is Buddha Śākyamuni, evidently performing one of his great miracles. Some have suggested that his holding a white petal indicates this is a culminating scene from the *Saddharmapundarika Sutra* (*Dam chos padma dkar po*), a tradition well known in China but not in Tibet.<sup>118</sup> It is true that the art may follow Chinese models here. Yet it seems more likely to depict one of the Buddha’s famous series

FIG. 4.5  
Buddha Śākyamuni  
Tibet; late 17th or 18th century  
27 ¾ x 18 ½ in. (70.5 x 47 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.128 (HAR 75)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 183, p. 454f.

of fifteen great miracles. Note the emanation of the wrathful bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi below, which he emanated in one miracle to overwhelm followers of non-Buddhist Indian spiritual traditions (yet here the terrified Indian teachers are absent).

The tonality of this painting is dark and somber. The painting’s colors may have been darkened (possibly by the smoke of votive lamps), and its dark blue and dark green pigment are in places somewhat abraded. (See the center of the upper sky and the head nimbus of the main figure.)

Figure 4.6, surviving in Potala Palace, is a very fine work of religious portraiture from the time of Desi Sanggye Gyatsho. This famous set also includes Figure 4.7 and embodies a continuation of the painting tradition of Chöying Gyatsho’s New Menri and may even be in the Tsangri of Tashilhunpo (which employed the same skies and clouds).<sup>119</sup>

Figure 4.6 is the Fifth Dalai Lama’s own portrait as central figure in the set. The painting’s contents are almost overwhelmingly rich and complex.

For comparing the basic skies and cloud types of the set, Figure 4.7 is simpler to use. It depicts the ancient King Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po) as a previous reincarnation of the Fifth Dalai Lama, again surrounded by episodes from that lama’s visionary life. (Another painting from the same set whose various New Menri clouds are worth careful comparison is the depiction of Dromtön.)<sup>120</sup>

For many years I considered these paintings to be a “Potala set” and









FIG. 4.6  
The Fifth Dalai Lama Surrounded by  
Episodes from His Visionary Life  
Tibet; late 17th century  
37 x 25 1/8 in. (94 x 64 cm)  
Preserved in Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet  
Literature: Rig 'dzin rdo rje et al. 1985, *Bod  
kyi thang ka*, no. 77; and D. Jackson 1996,  
pl. 32.

assumed they represented some of the best Ü-based New Menri painting of this period.<sup>121</sup> But when we compare the set with other Tsang works of the late seventeenth or eighteenth century, it seems not to represent a Menri style of Ü Province. It was more likely done by a follower of the New Menri of Tsang. Compare the treatment of sky and clouds and also the head ornaments. They are

exactly the same. I now assume it was painted for the Fifth Dalai Lama by a great Tsangri painter flourishing during Desi Sanggye Gyatsho's time.

Figure 4.8 exemplifies a very similar style. Its main subject is the First Panchen Lama, who also was the main patron of Chöying Gyatsho. This painting is the last in a set of xylograph-based *thangkas* showing the series of previous lives of the Panchen Rinpoche. I believe these eighteenth-century xylographs were ultimately based on an earlier set of *thangkas* designed by Chöying Gyatsho.<sup>122</sup> He delighted in depicting humans in a realistic partial profile, also preferring imbalanced compositions and dramatic landscapes. Note the realistic face of the main figure and his elaborate throne, which includes a golden dragon head and tassels.



FIG. 4.7  
King Songtsen Gampo Surrounded by  
Episodes from the Fifth Dalai Lama's  
Visionary Life  
Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet; late 17th  
century  
37 x 25 1/8 in. (ca. 94 x 64 cm)  
Preserved in Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet  
Literature: Bod ljongs po ta la do dam  
khru'u [Tibetan Administrative Office of the  
Potala] 1996, *The Potala, Holy Palace in the  
Snow Land*, p. 156; and D. Jackson 2005a,  
fig. 3.

One of the most dramatic elements in the painting is the convoluted pink cloud that threads around the tantric deity standing above to the left. The sky is divided into two sections, the lower zone of which (above the head nimbus of the main figure) is dark blue, while



Fig. 4.8  
The First Panchen in a Set Depicting His  
Previous Lives  
Tsang Province, Tibet; mid- or late 18th  
century  
27  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 15  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (70.2 x 39.1 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1996.21.2 (HAR 477)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 131.

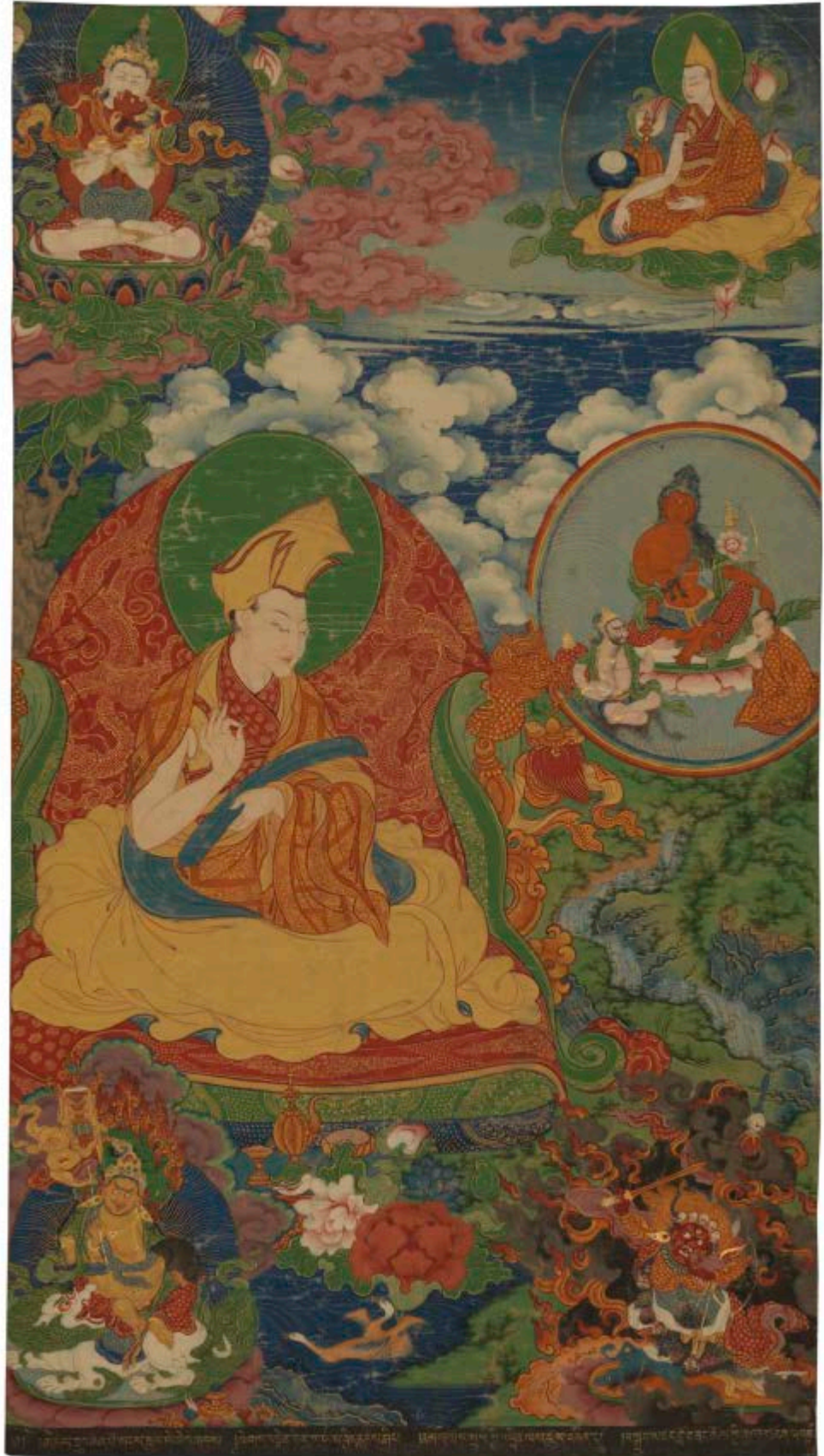






FIG. 4.10

Tsongkhapa with Episodes from His Life  
Tsang or Kham Province, Tibet; ca. 17th or  
18th century

41  $\frac{5}{16}$  x 26  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. (104.5 x 66.5 cm)

Essen Collection, Museum der Kulturen,  
Basel (Inv. no. IId13772)

Photograph by Peter Horner

© Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland  
(HAR 3313772)

Literature: G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo  
1989, no. I-90 and II-255.

distinctive shading of the white clouds.  
(A very similar and nearly contempo-  
raneous painting of the same subject  
survives in a Qing palace temple in  
Beijing.)<sup>124</sup>

Figure 4.9 is another example of a  
mid- or late eighteenth-century Tsangri  
style. It was once attributed, though not  
convincingly, to the “refined New Menri  
style of the Lhasa workshops around the  
turn of the century.”<sup>125</sup> The painting was  
based on images that had been dissemi-  
nated by block printing from xylograph  
blocks once kept at Narthang. Since it  
depicts many episodes from a classical  
Indian narrative (the moral tales of  
Kṣemendra), the background landscape  
is packed full. Still, we can see in the  
upper border of the landscape a series  
of white clouds below a solid dark-blue  
sky typical of the Tsangri. A single wavy  
pink cloud floats in the upper-right  
corner. These elements mark it as in the  
same style and period as the previous  
painting (Fig. 4.8).

Figure 4.10 is one of the finest sur-  
viving painted portraits of Tsongkhapa.  
Its composition is not symmetrical. The  
large snow mountain behind the main  
figure’s left shoulder is not balanced  
by anything on the other side of the  
landscape. Similarly, the sky to the right  
of Mañjuśrī is almost empty. Snow  
mountains figure prominently more than  
once. The main figure sits upon a throne  
with a very elaborate backrest, including  
the highly ornate golden heads of horned

Fig. 4.9, also Fig. 2.2

Buddha with Avadāna Tales

Tsang Province, Tibet; mid- or late 18th  
century

33  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 22  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (85.4 x 56.5 cm)

Rubin Museum of Art

F1996.27.1 (HAR 494)

Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 14, p. 159ff.

the upper one is lighter, bordered by a  
strip of smaller, more subtle clouds. The  
lama above right has a transparent body  
nimbus, which is very rare in the Menri  
(but more usual in the Karma Gardri.)

The set that depicted the Panchen  
Lamas’ prior incarnations was dissemi-  
nated through xylograph printing in the  
mid-eighteenth century.<sup>123</sup> This painting  
was presumably painted in the mid- or  
late eighteenth century in the Tsangri  
style. Note the dark blue skies and the









4.11

Phurbujok Ngawang Champa as Lineal  
Guru of the Lamrim Instructions  
Tsang Province, Tibet; mid- or late 18th  
century

35 ¼ x 24 in. (89.5 x 61 cm)

Rubin Museum of Art  
C2008.8 (HAR 68890)

mythical animals. (We shall see simpler  
versions of thrones with double dragon  
heads in Figs. 4.14 and 4.22.)

Though a fairly large painting, the  
details are almost as fine as a miniature.  
It might be in an excellent New Menri  
style of Tsang. (Or is it an extremely fine  
example of the Mensar from Kham?)  
One feature typical of the Kham Menri  
are the twisting “rainbow lights” that  
indicate miraculous visions in two  
scenes of the master’s life. Its landscape  
is more open and expansive than is  
usual in the Menri—and unlike Tsangri



FIG. 4.12, also Fig. 1.9

Tsongkhapa

Tashilhunpo, Tibet; late 18th or early 19th  
century

Dimensions unknown

Private Collection

(HAR 69912)

landscapes, which can quickly feel  
cluttered. (In the available photographs  
I cannot clearly determine whether the  
front three elements of head ornaments  
are closely grouped, but they may be.)<sup>126</sup>

Figure 4.11 is a more obvious  
example of a Tsangri style. It portrays  
the Geluk master Phurbujok Ngawang  
Champa (1682–1762), an important  
guru of the Third Panchen Lama Palden  
Yeshe. The inscription on the back  
implies that the painting formed part of  
a set portraying the gurus of the Stages  
of the Path instructions. He is shown  
wearing the same yellow meditation hat  
(*sgom zhwa*) as the First Panchen Lama.  
Behind the main figure are nine episodes  
from his saintly life with captions nam-  
ing his several gurus, while the patron is  
pictured sitting humbly offering a ritual  
mandala in the bottom-left corner. The  
sky has two sections; the lower part to  
the right of the main figure’s head nim-  
bus is dark blue.



The painting is brightly colored, with the pastel pink and orange puffs of clouds ringing the main figure. The bright orange and intense blue main body nimbus also does much to brighten the painting. It may have originally looked a little darker—the green head nimbus of the main figure is almost completely rubbed off, as are some areas of dark blue in the sky.

Figure 4.12 depicts Tsongkhapa according to one or more of Khedrup's five visions. It is noteworthy for the detailed depiction of Tashilhunpo Monastery. It must have been painted before the erection of the great Maitreya statue and chapel at Tashilhunpo in 1914.<sup>127</sup> Two additional unexpected depictions of sacred places are also found: Mount Potala (sacred realm of Avalokiteśvara) and the five-peaked holy mountain Wutai (abode of Mañjuśrī) are depicted in the background, to the right and left of Tashilhunpo, both identified by inscriptions.<sup>128</sup>

Though not as baroque or fine in execution as Figure 3.19 (the court-style portrait of the Eighth Dalai Lama), this painting shows an impressive variety of New Menri cloud types, most of which we saw in chapter 3. Here a rich reddish-pink is prominently used to color two cloud clusters, where offering-deities float to the right and left of the central figure. (Those pink clouds are dramatically outlined with a scalloped three-color trim and a dark indigo edge.) Most of the other cloud clusters are painted base colors of pastel orange, green, or gray.

The cloud clusters around the smaller three lamas below Tsongkhapa—the Gendün Drub and two Panchen Rinpoches of Tashilhunpo—are even more colorful. Each lobe of these three-lobed clouds is painted with its own base color, either pink, pale blue, pale green, or white. (This cloud cluster, too, is beautifully trimmed with the classic scalloped dark outline of light green, light blue, and dark indigo.)



Examples of the Tsangri sometimes turn up far from home. Figure 4.13, for instance, was preserved in Mongolia, but it clearly exemplifies the Tsangri style. The lineal guru above left seems to be the First (or Fourth) Panchen Lama of Tashilhunpo. (We should not forget that the first Jetsun Dampa, the head lama of

FIG. 4.13  
Mandala  
Tsang Province, Tibet; 18th century?  
26  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 16  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (68 x 41.5 cm)  
Preserved in Bogd-Khan Palace Museum,  
Mongolia  
After: N. Tsultem 1986, fig. 40.







FIG. 4.14 (opposite page)  
The Fourth Panchen Lama  
Tsang Province, Tibet; ca. first half of the  
19th century  
Cloth, silk thread, pigment, wood, and cord  
119 ½ x 68 in. (72.5 x 44.5 cm)  
Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology,  
American Museum of Natural History (acc.  
no. 70.2/ 753)  
(HAR 94400; 702\_753)

Mongolia, was a disciple of that same Panchen Rinpoche and visited Tsang as a young lama.)

Here the solid dark-blue sky and cloud shapes are unmistakably those of the Tsangri. Note the prominent use of pastel orange and pink cloud clusters around the lamas above right and left and also the vegetal decorative fringe in the sky with two clusters of three large pomegranate- or peach-like fruits (possibly aegle, *bil ba*) each. Could such paintings have been produced in Mongolia? Yes, if a Tsangri painter had been invited there.

Figure 4.14 seems to be a somewhat later example of the Tsangri continued down to the first half of the nineteenth century. It portrays the fourth Panchen Losang Tenpe Nyima (1782–1853). The painting continues the tradition of Figure 4.13, the Tsangri of Tashilhunpo. The serpentine decorative vines with many pairs of similar fruit are also found in the skies of the alternative Tsang Menri tradition exemplified by Figure 4.27, but the painter here avoids the crowding of figures. The top of the backrest around the central lama’s green head nimbus is one of the most ornate of any style or period. (Another painting that depicts the Third Panchen Rinpoche Losang Palden Yeshe has a similarly ornate head nimbus backdrop (HAR 439) though with radiating golden rays in the head nimbuses of all three lamas portrayed; it may be from Amdo but is certainly not one of the usual Tsangri styles.)<sup>129</sup>



Figure 4.15 is a later (nineteenth-century?) mural that exemplifies a Tsangri style as it was continued at Tashilhunpo. This mural depicts Śākyamuni with his two main disciples and Indian and Tibetan teachers above. The Tibetan lamas include the founder of Tashilhunpo above the Buddha and Tsongkhapa above his head. (The eight Indian teachers depicted are the standard grouping “Six Ornaments and Two Supreme Ones.”) According to Michael Henss, who photographed the mural at Tashilhunpo in the early 1980s, it was preserved in the north gallery of the main courtyard. The style dates to about the nineteenth century. The painting can thus be localized geographically but cannot be more exactly dated without onsite research.

The base colors of the clouds are varied and include pastel pink and orange. Indeed, the clouds under the two lowermost lamas (the two most recent Panchen Rinpoches?) have multicolor base hues, and several possess prominent “cloud eyes.” Note also the ornate vegetal background that encroaches on

FIG. 4.15  
Buddha Śākyamuni with His Two Main  
Monk Disciples and Indian and Tibetan  
Teachers  
Mural, north gallery, main courtyard,  
Tashilhunpo, Tibet; ca. 19th century  
Dimensions unknown  
After: M. Henss 1981, pl. 91.

the head nimbus of two of the Indian pandits in the top register.

Figure 4.16 is a more recent work of sacred portraiture in the Tsangri style. It evidently depicts as its main figure the Panchen Rinpoche Chökyi Gyaltsen (1949–1989). Though I did not see him identified as such in the book of Kachen Losang Phüntshok in which it served as frontispiece, that lama was one of the main people who inspired the Tashilhunpo artist to write the artist’s manual from which this painting was reproduced. I believe the *thangka* not only paid tribute to that revered master but also demonstrated that the painting traditions of Tashilhunpo still flourished in the 1980s. The extremely ornate throne





FIG. 4.16  
Panchen Rinpoche Chökyi Gyaltsen  
Tsang Province, Tibet; 1980s  
Dimensions unknown  
After: Kachen Losang Phüntshok 1993,  
frontispiece.

back alone pays homage to the central master in an extraordinary way.

The clouds in the sky are painted three different base colors: light blue, pale brown, and darker blue. In the three-lobed cumulus clouds, each main lobe has three gill-like layers of shading, making the clouds look fluffier and thicker. Three snow mountains are depicted on the left side of the landscape; tiny snow lions cavort on the leftmost glacier peak at the edge

of the painting. Note also the several types of golden auspicious objects and three-jewel clusters raining down in the sky. (For examples of Tsangri-style head ornaments drawn by the same painter, see chapter 3, Figures 3.11 and 3.13.)

Figure 4.17 shows Master Padmasambhava as the main subject among three great figures of eighth-century Tibet: the Preceptor (Śāntarakṣita), Master (Padmasambhava), and Religious King (Trisong Detsen) (Tib. *mkhan slob chos gsum*). It is another recent example of the Tsangri of Tashilhunpo, though it was published in Amdo. It appears in the illustrated book *Buddhist Pictorial Art of Tibet*, which reproduces several paintings from Amdo in color plates 4 to 7. However, the four *thangkas* on the front and back of the dust jacket (Buddha Śākyamuni, Avalokiteśvara, Tsongkhapa, and Padmasambhava) are in the recent Tsangri style of Tashilhunpo. They were painted in the mid- to late twentieth century (ca. 1980s). (The late Panchen Rinpoche Chökyi Gyaltsen [1949–1989] and the current Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso were both born in Amdo and hence had a special personal link with Amdo Province.) But their sky color is not the usual dark blue of most Tsangri paintings (perhaps the result of inaccurate color reproduction during publication).

The painting is much simpler (and probably smaller) than Figure 4.16. The clouds are painted in two base colors: light blue and pale brown. The landscape composition is asymmetrical, with two snow mountains on the left horizon. The shapes of the three-lobed cumulus clouds near the snow mountains have three layers of shading on their main lobes, as before. Note the tiny snow lions cavorting on the glacier peak at the left edge of the painting. Once again, several kinds of golden auspicious objects rain down in the background sky (as we saw in Fig. 4.16). Here four small glistening clusters of three jewels bedeck the inner field of the main figure's head nimbus.





FIG. 4.17  
Padmasambhava  
By Kachen Losang Phüntshok of  
Tashlhunpo  
Tsang Province, Tibet; 1970s–1980s  
Dimensions unknown  
After: *Bod kyi nang bstan lha ris kyi sgyu*  
*rtal* (1987), dust jacket, back cover, left.

Another example of a late twentieth-century Tsangri style is Figure 4.18, a painting that was published as a poster in the 1980s. Painted by Kachen Losang Phüntshok, it depicts a Sakya theme: Phakpa Lotrö Gyaltsen (‘Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan, 1235–1280), the last of the five great founding masters of Sakya. Part of a Sakya lineage is shown by the minor figures: the last two eminent lamas of Sakya (to the right and left of the central figure’s head nimbus) are Jamgön Sönam Wangpo (‘Jam mgon bSod nams dbang po, twenty-second throne holder

of Sakya) and Trakshül Trinle Rinchen (Drag shul phrin las rin chen 1871–1935, thirty-sixth throne holder).

The three-lobed cumulus clouds are not quite as elaborate as the “three-gilled” clouds of Figure 4.16. They feature miniscule “cloud eyes” of a type allowed by the Tsangri. As in the previous two paintings, golden auspicious objects are shown falling from the background sky. Once again small clusters of three jewels decorate the inner field of the central head nimbus, here five in number.

The Tsangri style still flourishes among painters of the generation trained in Tibet after the Cultural Revolution. Figure 4.19 was painted by a contemporary Tsangri-style master painter named Norbu Sithar (Nor bu Sri thar). His family came from Roktsho (Rog mtsho) in eastern Lhatse Dzong (near Bodong E) in Tsang, and his ancestors there painted for three generations in an Eri style that his grandfather had learned



FIG. 4.18  
Phakpa Lotrö Gyaltsen, Founding Master  
of Sakya  
By Kachen Losang Phüntshok  
Tsang Province, Tibet; late 20th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Published as a poster, Lhasa, 1980s  
Literature: D. Jackson 2005a, fig. 8.

in Lhasa. Norbu Sithar first studied the Eri but later returned to a Tsangri style under the tutelage of a Tsangri artist from Tsedong. The two- and three-lobed cumulus clouds in the dark blue sky and below right in the landscape are classic Tsangri and highly distinct from the Eri trilobed cloud type. (Their “cloud eyes” are larger than those in Fig. 4.18.) Note also the single triangular glacier peak above right with three frolicking snow lions and wreathed by clouds.





FIG. 4.19  
White Mañjuśrī  
Tibet; late 20th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Published as a poster, Lhasa, ca. 2000  
Literature: D. Jackson 2005a, fig. 15.

#### OTHER TSANGRI TRADITIONS

Besides the main Tsangri based at Tashilhunpo/Shigatse, several other branches of the same Tsang New Menri flourished in Tsang. The painters of Tsedong are a well-known alternative locus for the Tsangri. Others were based in the Nyang valley (in Gyantse) and elsewhere.

#### *Three Varieties of the Tsangri in Previous Generations*

The painter Phüntshok Sangpo (Phun tshogs bzang po) was a proud upholder of the Tsangri style in recent generations. In his painting manual, he enumerated three main provincial styles—Üri, Tsangri, and Khamri—stressing the need for each style to preserve its distinct identity.<sup>130</sup> His manual documents the

richness and complexity of the Tsangri tradition, discerning three distinct sub-traditions within it in the generations prior to him:

1. The tradition of Trokhyung (Bro khyung).<sup>131</sup> This tradition possessed slightly more rocky crags and streams but relatively fewer clouds and flowers.
2. The tradition of Rikzang (Rigs bzang), the master painter of Kyide Shar (sKyid bde shar).<sup>132</sup> This was basically a Tsangri style, to which certain excellent elements from Chinese painting (Rgya bris) had been added.
3. The tradition of Phüntshok Sangpo's teacher, Sönam Tobgye (bSod nams stobs rgyas), in which crags, streams, clouds, and flowers were widely depicted. The colors were applied intensely, and the bodily proportions were authentic.<sup>133</sup>

Phüntshok Sangpo studied thirteen years under a painter named Sönam Tobgye (bSod nams stobs rgyas), the youngest son of the famous Tsangri painting master Uchen Jigme (dBu chen 'Jigs med). Uchen Jigme had two older sons (Phüntshok Wanggyal and Penpa Gyalpo); he participated in the painting of murals during the renovation of the Jokhang in Lhasa in the time of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. Uchen Jigme's teacher was the renowned painter Losang Paljor (Blo bzang dpal 'byor), a monk-painter of Tashilhunpo, who was the disciple of Uchen Drakpa Chöphel (Grags pa chos 'phel) who had painted *thangkas* for a previous incarnation of the Panchen Rinpoche in about the mid- to late nineteenth century, perhaps for the Fifth Panchen Losang Tenpe Wangchuk (Blo bzang bstan pa'i dbang phyug, 1855–1882).<sup>134</sup>

In 1945 Phüntshok Sangpo participated in renovating the great Lhakhang



Chenmo temple of Sakya. About eighty painters were summoned from other parts of Tsang, including in far-western Tsang (sTod, e.g., Shekar), Lhatse,<sup>135</sup> Bodong (Bo dong) and Tsedong.<sup>136</sup> The artist Wangdu (dBang 'dud) from Tse-dong, chief overseer of painting (*lha bris dbu chen*) in the project, remarked on the purity and authenticity of Phüntshok Sangpo's Tsangri style.<sup>137</sup>

In central Tibet, the Tsangri painters of Tashilhunpo were the main rivals of the "Epa," or Eri, style painters in Ü. In the last two centuries they were occasionally called to work together on the same important central-government sponsored projects in Lhasa. For instance, a group of Tsangri-style painters was summoned in the 1930s to work at Lhasa in Ü on major renovation projects. At that time they picked up some techniques of traditional pigment usage from the painters from Ü Province.<sup>138</sup>

#### TSANGRI *THANGKAS* FOR PATRONS OF THE SAKYA SCHOOL

Figure 4.20 is a slightly earlier (late seventeenth- or eighteenth-century) example of Tsangri-style painting from the Sakya sect. It comes from a published set of *thangkas* that depict Chögyal Phakpa's biography, which was compiled and published by Shuwen Yang and others.<sup>139</sup>

Though dated by Yang et al. 1987 to the Ming dynasty (and on p. 17 as "not later than 1478"), this set actually dates to the second half of the seventeenth or first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>140</sup> Yang et al. record a local tradition that it was painted by a famous monk of Sakya (*Sa skya'i btsun pa grags can*) called Lochen (Blo chen).<sup>141</sup> They say that its size is "60 x 90 cm."<sup>142</sup> In the painting illustrated on page 23, the latest great Sakya lama portrayed is Ames Zhabs (1597–1659); hence it cannot date before the 1630s or 1640s at



the very earliest, though it could date a generation or two later than he lived.<sup>143</sup> It was no doubt painted at Sakya by a contemporary exponent of the Tsangri style. Here the head ornament of the central figure does not follow the 1-3-1 ordering: the jewels are evenly spaced.

Figure 4.21 depicts two great lamas of Sakya. Judging from its Tsangri style, it probably came from Sakya or nearby

FIG. 4.20  
Amitāyus with Famous Sakya Gurus and  
Lamas  
Second in a set portraying Chögyal Phakpa's  
biography  
Tsang Province, Tibet; late 17th or 18th  
century  
23 5/8 x 35 3/8 in. ("60 x 90 cm")  
After: Shuwen Yang et al. comp. 1987, no.  
2, p. 23.





FIG. 4.21  
Two Great Lamas of Sakya  
Sakya, Tsang Province, Tibet; late 18th or  
early 19th century  
27 x 21 ½ in. (68.6 x 54.6 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.413 (HAR 860)

in Tsang, and it apparently dates to about the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The main figures may be two eminent brothers from the Sakya Khön (Sa skya 'Khon) family of the same generation; they look very youthful. If so, they may be the sons of the central guru above them, who wears a similar Sakya hat. (If the painting shows two young Sakya Khön masters in about 1800, they might be two sons of the eminent Sakya throne holder Wangdu Nyingpo [dBang sdud snying po, 1763?–1806?]).<sup>144</sup>

All but one of the important human figures are shown in partial profile, and many are portrayed with considerable realism. (The fact that head nimbuses are lacking on the lower four

humans adds to the realism.) Although it is a balanced composition (and lacks snow peaks), it is in some other ways typical of the Tsangri. It has solid dark-blue skies and three types of white and pink clouds. The head ornaments of the protective deity Mahākāla Gönpo Gur below are not clearly arranged in the typical 1-3-1 ordering of the Tsangri.

#### A SAKYA PAINTING FROM TSANG NOT IN THE TSANGRI STYLE

Figure 4.22 depicts the eminent nineteenth-century abbot of Ngor, Thartse Champa Kunga Tendzin (Thar rtse Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin, 1776–1862; abbatial tenure 1811–1821). He has a distinctive beard, for which the Thartse abbots of Ngor were famous. The painting contains an elaborate colophon, including three elegant verses in honor of that abbot, who is said to have been already deceased when the painting was made.<sup>145</sup> The verses are signed by a lama whose name as scholar of language arts was very long—Jampal Gyepe Shenyen Tsuklak Mawe Nyima Chok Thamje Lay Nampar Gyalway De ('Jam dpal dgyes pa'i bshes gnyen gtsug lag smra ba'i nyi ma phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i sde). Who was he, and when did he help sponsor the painting?<sup>146</sup>

The interminable name turns out to be one of the aliases of a slightly later lama of the same Thartse lama palace, Thartse Khenchen Champa Kunga Tenpe Gyaltshen (Thar rtse mKhan chen Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1829–1870). It was apt for him to sign himself using that name

FIG. 4.22 (opposite page)  
Champa Kunga Tendzin, an Abbot of Ngor  
By Kalsang Rabgye of Tanak district of  
Tsang for the Thartse Labrang of Ngor  
Tsang Province, Tibet; between 1862 and  
1870  
72 x 44 in. (182.9 x 111.8 cm)  
Zimmerman Family Collection  
Literature: P. Pal 1997, pl. 34.







here, in his role as poetical author. He was the fifty-first abbot of Ngor (tenure 1851–1859) and was a key transmitter of the main Ngor lineages and author of the three detailed biographies of Thartse masters including Champa Namkha Chime (Byams pa nam mkha ‘chi med) and his nephews found in the Esoteric Path with the Fruit (*Lam ‘bras slob bshad*) collection. In the long colophon to these three biographies of the Thartse masters, the author, Champa Kunga Tenpe Gyaltsen, mentions several of his aliases, including this one.<sup>147</sup> He must have written the inscription after the death of its subject in 1862 but before 1870 (the year of his own death).<sup>148</sup>

The inscription supplies the interesting details that the painting was financed by the Thartse lama palace of Ngor Ewam and that its painter was Kalsang Rabgye (bsKal bzang rab rgyas) of Tanak (rTa nag) district in northern Tsang. The inscription was not reproduced in the previously published plate.<sup>149</sup> Such base strips of inscriptions are prone to being overlooked or cut off during reproduction, also in my own publications of Ngor paintings.<sup>150</sup>

If we had no inscriptions to work from, the painting would not be immediately obvious on stylistic grounds as a *thangka* painted in Tsang. The main throne is reminiscent of late Beri-style thrones. The composition is perfectly balanced. The sky is not dark blue; it is divided into two fields by a thin, white band of clouds below the first register. The human figures most likely portrayed are the eight Indian gurus (*rgyan drug mchog gnyis*) with an abbreviated Sakya lineage originating from Virupa. The later Sakya gurus include Chögyal Phakpa and perhaps a bare-headed Ngorchén, founder of the Ngor tradition. The clouds around the central buddha in the top register float in the midst of other clouds painted in colorful pink, yellow, blue, and green. They are intertwined with several long undulating bands of mystic “rainbow



lights” (*‘ja’ ‘od*). Some of the clouds have small, deeply shadowed holes, almost like the later Eri clouds. However, the middle three skulls on the head of the protective deity Mahākāla Gurgyi Gönpö below are grouped closely together, as in the Tsangri.

#### DOUBTFUL CASES OF THE TSANGRI STYLE

*Mensar of Tsang, Kham, or Amdo?*

As another group of paintings that were

FIG. 4.23  
Buddha Śākyamuni  
Possibly Kham Province, Tibet; late 19th  
century  
29 7/8 x 20 1/2 in. (76 x 52 cm)  
Hahn Cultural Foundation  
Literature: K. Tanaka 2005, p. 150f., no. 26.





FIG. 4.24  
Buddha with Avadāna Moral Tales  
Possibly Amdo Province, Tibet; 18 or 19th  
century  
34  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 22  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (88.3 x 56.3 cm)  
Hahn Cultural Foundation  
Literature: K. Tanaka 2005, no. 28.

evidently painted in the Tsangri or a closely related style, let us consider several later copies of Narthang print-based Avadāna paintings; several are preserved by the Hahn Cultural Foundation in Korea. (We saw one example from that set above as Fig. 4.9.) Both the Tsangri and Kham Mensar paintings are normally classified as “New Menri” styles. We would expect them to be similar, but can we tell them apart?

Figure 4.23 depicts Buddha Śākyamuni, perhaps as the central *thangka* of a multi-*thangka* set. Kimiaki Tanaka suggested that this was the central painting of the Derge xylograph set depicting the Twelve Great Deeds of the Buddha. He added that it could be an original painting by Phurbu Tshering of Chamdo, founder of the New Menri style of Kham in the late nineteenth century.<sup>151</sup>

No central *thangka* existed for the published Derge block-print set of the great deeds.<sup>152</sup> This *thangka* at first sight seemed closer to the Tsangri style than to a New Menri of Kham: note the solid dark-blue sky and other features (the shading and coloring of its clouds). Yet the painting seems relatively flat, with muted greens and blues, in comparison with Tsangri paintings. When we compare this with Figure 4.9—a Tsangri painting of the same set of blocks—we see in the other painting a similar dark blue sky but also a deeper shading of clouds.

One indication of a connection with the New Menri of Kham and the Derge Twelve Great Deeds set are the three twisting “rainbow lights” floating in the sky behind the three offering goddesses above left. Similar mystical lights are included in five out of nine of Phurbu Tshering’s Twelve Great Deeds, and they appear twice in the last one showing the Buddha’s final Great Nirvana.<sup>153</sup> So Tanaka’s stylistic intuition was not misplaced.

Figure 4.24 is even less clear cut. It, too, seems at first glance to be an example of a Tsangri style, as seen from such details as its solid dark-blue sky. But the clouds are nearly monochromatic throughout the painting and the central buddha’s head nimbus is filled with a whorl of golden light rays—not at all typical of the paintings that we have seen so far. If the painting is from Tsang, then it represents a tradition that was not closely linked with the painting tradition of Tashilhunpo (such as Figs. 4.9 and





FIG. 4.25  
Amitāyus  
Given by the Panchen Rinpoche to the  
Qianlong emperor in his 45th year (1780)  
for his longevity  
Tsang Province, Tibet; late 1770s  
30  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 22  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (78.5 x 58 cm)  
Preserved in the Palace Museum, Beijing,  
China  
Literature: The Palace Museum 1992,  
*Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism*  
*Collected in the Qing Palace*, pl. 16–1,  
p. 204.

4.23).<sup>154</sup> Until I can confirm the presence of such a radiant head nimbus in a painting from Tsang, I will suspect it comes from elsewhere, perhaps Amdo. (Fig. 5.27, a mural from Horkhok in Kham, has a similar nimbus, the only one that I have so far confirmed outside Amdo.)



FIG. 4.26  
White Mañjuśrī  
Given by the Panchen Rinpoche to the  
Qianlong emperor in his 45th year (1780) for  
his longevity  
Tsang Province, Tibet?; late 1770s  
30  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 22  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (78.5 x 58 cm)  
Preserved in The Palace Museum, Beijing,  
China  
Literature: The Palace Museum 1992,  
*Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism*  
*Collected in the Qing Palace*, pl.17–1, p.  
204.

of his reign (1780) for his longevity.<sup>155</sup> If my assumption is correct, these paintings confirm that the Panchen Rinpoche esteemed this alternative style of Tsang and gave examples even to the Chinese emperor.

In Figures 4.25 and 4.26, the landscapes—especially the skies and clouds—are different from the examples

#### MINOR STYLES IN TSANG

In addition to the dominant Tsangri of Tashilhunpo, a few minor styles also existed in Tsang. For instance, in the twentieth century the Eri style was maintained by some painters in Shekar, Gyantse, and Bodong E. (The Shekar branch of the Eri has already been detailed in chapter 3.) There also existed families in western Tsang who painted in more conservative varieties of the Menri.

Figures 4.25 and 4.26 seem to exemplify an alternative style of Tsang. They were preserved in the Palace Museum in Beijing among the paintings given by the Panchen Rinpoches to the Chinese Qing emperors. Both Figure 4.25, a painting of Amitāyus, and Figure 4.26, a depiction of White Mañjuśrī, were given by the Panchen Rinpoche to the Qianlong emperor (ruled 1736–1796) in the forty-fifth year





FIG. 4.27  
Green Tārā  
Tsang Province, Tibet?; 18th century  
29 ½ x 16 ¾ in. (75 x 42.5 cm)  
Preserved in Potala Palace  
After: Rig 'dzin rdo rje et al. 1985, *Bod kyi  
thangka*, no. 104.

of the Tsangri that we have seen. The painter is willing to make the compositions more crowded and to litter the sky with decorative floral elements where the clouds might otherwise be. In both paintings the protective deities below

with their surrounding masses of flames encroach upon the space normally reserved for the main figure's lotus seat. In Figure 4.26, moreover, the clouds to either side of the main figure loom forward, overlapping the main deity's body nimbus, their tips penetrating all the way to the edge of the deep blue inner nimbus, something that is unheard of in Tibetan painting. (Still, many of the elements (peachlike fruits, hills, and even some clouds) are very close, so it is conceivable that these two painting types may just represent unexpected alternative modes of painting practiced by followers of the Tsangri at Tashilhunpo.)

Figure 4.27 is a third example depicting Green Tārā and is now in Potala Palace. Though not as immaculately preserved as the two from the imperial temple in Beijing, it nevertheless shows many of the same stylistic elements (in a slightly smaller painting).<sup>156</sup> Its landscape is crowded with wonderful details. Note how the two accompanying goddesses standing to right and left overlap a large part of the main figure's body nimbus. Flowering vines encroach upon the main head nimbus much more than usual.

#### ANOTHER BRANCH OF THE MENRI STYLE IN WESTERN TSANG

Besides the Tashilhunpo-based Tsangri styles that flourished in Shigatse, Tsedong, and Gyantse, branches of an older more conservative Menri survived until the 1950s in western Tsang—at Dar ('Dar) in Lhatse, and elsewhere in Latō (La stod)—including some painters in Shekar. Their distinct tradition was presumably upheld by some of the old painter families who executed the murals of the great monuments in Tsang of the fifteenth century.<sup>157</sup> My first *thangka*-painting teacher and informant, Dargye (sGang zur Dar rgyas, full personal name Tshe ring dar rgyas, b. 1931) of Dar, was born into such a conservative



Menri tradition. According to him, the skies in their *thangkas* were similarly very dark, though other landscape and decorative elements were not identical with those in the Tsangri of Tashilhunpo.<sup>158</sup> The most accomplished artists within this group could still receive the patronage of high and discerning patrons (such as the Panchen Rinpoche and his court), though they could not dislodge the painters of Chöying Gyatsho's New Menri from their positions of highest prestige in Tsang.

#### *A Recent Painter from Near Lhatse*

Gangsur Dargye of Dar was the son of Nyima Norbu (Nyi ma nor bu, ca. 1901–1969?) of the Gangsur (sGang zur, i.e., sGang chen zur pa) family in Lhatse county of western Tsang. His father was not a painter. Dargye learned that art under his paternal uncle Champa (Byams pa), a fully qualified artist who had learned from his maternal uncle Tendzin Tshultrim (bsTan 'dzin tshul khirms, ca. 1874–1956?). Tendzin Tshultrim, at one time a monk, was the son of the great painter Norbu Tashi (Nor bu bkra shis). The latter was highly praised by one of the Panchen Rinpoches of the nineteenth century (the fourth Panchen Losang Tenpe Nyima, 1782–1853, or fifth Panchen Losang Palden Chökyi Trakpa Tenpe Wangchuk, 1855–1882): “His paintings are so outstanding that they do not require ritual vivification (*rab gnas*)!” The family lineage of Norbu Tashi was called Darpa ('Dar pa), because its homeland was Dar ('Dar) Valley in western Tsang.<sup>159</sup>

Figure 4.28 was painted in Nepal in the 1970s or 1980s by Gangsur Dargye or someone with a very similar style. One highly distinctive feature of that *thangka* (and perhaps of his painting in general) was the use of wet-shading for the clouds—the usual practice for painting murals, not *thangkas*.



According to Dargye, his Dar- and Lhatse-based tradition was an offshoot of the Menri. In its iconometric practice, the tradition went back to the teachings of Menthangpa Menla Döndrup but had been simplified to a system of only five basic proportional classes (*thig khang*).<sup>160</sup> The painters of both Lhatse and Shekar counties worked in Menri traditions of Tsang (he considered it to also be a “Tsangri” style), though their style was a bit provincial, having preserved some old-fashioned features.<sup>161</sup> They were similar, in particular, in their use of colors. Both tended to use the basic colors pure and unmixed. By contrast, artists of Tashilhunpo used to mix in a little green with their blues. According to Dargye, “Nowadays

FIG. 4.28  
Protective Deity  
Tsang Province, Tibet, or Nepal; 1970s or 1980s  
Dimensions unknown  
Private Collection

among painters living outside of Tibet, the styles are rapidly changing.”<sup>162</sup>

Before 1959 the Gangsur family of Dar was the subject (*mi ser*) of both Sakya and Tashilhunpo. There was no annual tax on artists—though if summoned for a major restoration—they were obliged to go. Such work was not well paid. There were about fifteen or sixteen painters who were subjects of their local county (*rdzong*), Lhatse. All would assemble in the summer





FIG. 4.29  
The Goddess Tashi Tsheyi Lhamo  
Shar Khumbu, Nepal; 1970s  
Ink drawing by Shorong Au Legshe  
After: Khenpo Sangay Tenzin 1975, p. 413.

for projects sponsored by the county administration. (Lhatse, Ngamring, and Phüntshok Ling counties were among the most important artistically of the sixteen counties in Tsang.) Most of Tsang was under the Tashilhunpo administration, whereas western Tsang (La stod) and Ngari were governed by the Lhasa government. Tsedong (rTse gdong), the home of famous metal-working sculptors, was renowned for its clever skillful people, and several traditional adages alluded to this.<sup>163</sup>

Dargye studied under his father until age thirteen. He came to Nepal in 1964 (at age thirty-three), arriving as a poor refugee after completing a prison

term of two years and nine months and then living under the new Maoist conditions in Tibet for one year. He stayed first in Shar Khumbu in the Sherpa district of northeastern Nepal, studying under the Sherpa painters Khepa Kalden (mKhas pa sKal ldan) and Shorong Au Legshe (Sho rong A'u Legs bshad).<sup>164</sup> Both worked in western Tsangri styles similar to his home style, as seen in Au Legshe's drawings illustrated by Figures 4.29 and 4.30.

In Ü and Tsang Provinces, women were almost never allowed to paint. The only known exception was a nun from Tsedong. Tsedong Penpa Dorje mentions her as "Jomo Chödrön" (Jo mo Chos sgron).<sup>165</sup> Boys from certain low-class craftsmen families (for example, blacksmiths) were also not allowed to become artists (some were not allowed to become monks, either). In western Tsang ("stod" means here La stod), the title *khepa* (*mkhas pa*) was used to address or name an artist. That title has



FIG. 4.30  
Drubchen Melong  
Shar Khumbu, Nepal; 1970s  
Ink drawing by Shorong Au Legshe  
After: Khenpo Sangay Tenzin 1975, p. 367.

become in some cases a family name, as Dingri Khepa (Ding ri mKhas pa) and Khumchung Khepa (Khum chung mKhas pa). Some families with this name have stopped actually working as artists, but they still retain the old Khepa element in their names.<sup>166</sup>

### THREE SCULPTURES FROM WESTERN TSANG

In metalworking, too, some regional styles existed.<sup>167</sup> It will probably become possible to identify the workmanship of some of the centers of outstanding craftsmen, such as Derge. Another seat of a distinguished local style—though to



locate it historically we must move back in time to the fifteenth century—was northern Latö in Tsang.

Figures 4.31 through 4.33 may represent a provincial sub-school of sculpture in Tsang known as the “Northern Tradition.”<sup>168</sup> As far as I can tell, it was not based in northern (nomadic) Tsang, but in the northern district of western Tsang called northern Latö (La stod byang). E. Gene Smith calls attention to the school more than three decades ago but had trouble identifying published examples:<sup>169</sup>

Among the regional styles, the “Northern Tradition” of northwest Gtsang (*Byang lugs*) with its antiquity and exaggerated realism is also of interest. It may be one of the oldest schools of art. It is associated with Ngam rings, the capital of the myriarchs of La stod Byang, and seems to have enjoyed a brief period of popularity around Ya ’brog.

Smith states (in footnotes 864 and 865) that the style was associated with Changdak Namgyal Drakzang (Byang bdag rNam rgyal grags bzang), but it cannot have flourished beyond the early seventeenth century. “No examples of tangkas have yet come to light,” he writes and adds intriguingly, “Bronzes that clearly belong to this style exist. These are strikingly realistic.”<sup>170</sup>

Judging by these three sculptures, the tradition did produce realistic images of the highest quality. Another characteristic was the excellent engraving of textiles.

Figure 4.31 depicts the great Tibetan sage and adept Thangtong Gyalpo (Thang stong rgyal po, 1385–1464), who spent his last years in Jung Riwoche (lCung Ri bo che) in western Tsang. His face, hair, and robes were executed with much care and realism. The statue bears the inscription: “This image of the adept Thangtong



FIG. 4.31  
Thangtong Gyalpo  
Western Tsang (Latö Chang, La stod Byang),  
Tibet; 1450–1500  
Copper alloy with polychromy  
Height 5 1/8 in (13.1 cm)  
Nyingjei Lam Collection  
(HAR 68496)  
Literature: D. Weldon and J. Casey Singer  
1999, p. 185; H. Stoddard 2003, fig. 18b; C.  
Stearns 2007, fig. 1; and D. Jackson 2011,  
fig. 1.16.

FIG. 4.32  
Changdak Namgyal Drakzang  
Western Tsang Province, Tibet; 1450–1500  
Copper alloy?  
Height 5 1/2 in. (14 cm)  
The John and Berthe Ford Collection  
Photograph © the Walters Museum,  
Baltimore  
F.39 (HAR 73869)  
Literature: P. Pal 2001, no. 173; C. Stearns  
2010, p. 63, fig. 10.









FIG. 4.33  
Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen  
Western Tsang Province (Latö Chang, La  
stod Byang), Tibet; 1450–1500  
Copper alloy  
Literature: U. von Schroeder 2001, vol. 2,  
pl. 228E; and C. Stearns 2010, p. xiv?



Gyalpo contains consecration barley from the lord's own hand." (Tib. *grub thob thang stong rgyal po 'i sku rje rang nyid gyi phyag nas bzhugs so.*)<sup>171</sup>

If the inscription referring to its consecration is accurate, the statue is a realistic portrait dating to the master's lifetime. There is no need to doubt that inscription. Thangtong Gyalpo sponsored many excellent works of art, including statues made with precious and unusual substances. The present statue is notable for the strong pins that bolt down its metal base.<sup>172</sup>

Figure 4.32 depicts the great religious scholar and ruler Changdak Namgyal Drakzang (Byang bdag rNam rgyal

grags bzang, 1395–1475). The inscription below pays respect: "Homage to Namgyal Drakpa Sangpo, an emanation of the Rigden [Rulers of Shambhala]!" (Tib. *rigs ldan sprul pa rnam rgyal grags pa bzang po la na mo//*). Namgyal Drakzang had important links with Thangtong Gyalpo, the sage depicted in Figure 4.31. He sent both material support and artists to help when Thangtong Gyalpo built the great stupa of Jung Riwoche.<sup>173</sup> The master's long-sleeved robes are inscribed with detailed brocade motifs, including many lotus designs.

Figure 4.33 is a final example of that same "Northern Style" of sculpture. It depicts Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltshen (Dol

po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan, 1292–1361), who founded the monastery and stupa of Jonang in Latö. He flourished a few generations before the previous two masters (Figs. 4.31 and 4.32), with whom he had important connections. Thangtong Gyalpo was considered the immediate rebirth of Dolpopa.<sup>174</sup> Namgyal Drakzang considered himself a follower of the Jonang tradition, especially the Kālacakra instructions, whose highest expert and authority he believed Dolpopa to be.<sup>175</sup> Dolpopa's life and thought have inspired a book-length study.<sup>176</sup>







KHAM IS THE VAST PROVINCE to the east of central Tibet.<sup>177</sup> Lying south of the other eastern province, Amdo, it could thus rightly be called southeastern Tibet. The people of Kham are known for their distinctive speech, dress, character, and customs. The best artists and artisans among them have enjoyed a high renown throughout Tibet.<sup>178</sup>

#### GEOGRAPHY

Kham Province is a vast area that includes many fertile river-valley districts. It is the most densely inhabited part of Tibet. The people of Kham (Khampas) include both people living mainly as settled farmers in the river valleys and those living as nomadic herdsmen in the high uplands. It currently comprises forty-six counties.

Its terrain . . . is characterized by extremely rugged mountains in parallel ranges extending from northwest to southeast, broken by deep forested gorges. The ranges are narrow and rocky with steep slopes, sharp ridges and high alpine pastures, while some peaks have spectacular glaciers. Eroded ravines and deep forested gorges of limestone and sandstone have been cut by the Salween [Ngülchu], Mekong [Dzachu] and Yangtze [Drichu] rivers and their numerous tributaries, hence the name traditionally given

to Kham: the “four rivers and six ranges” [*chu bzhi sgang drug*].<sup>179</sup>

Before 1959, Kham was politically a mosaic of semi-independent principalities. (Like Amdo, Kham was a traditional province of Greater Tibet, but it was not an administrative one.) In recent centuries, the significant kingdoms or small states included:<sup>180</sup>

The five kingdoms of Chakla, Derge, Lingtshang, Nangchen, and Lhato, ruled by hereditary kings (*gyalpo*); the five agricultural states of Trehor (Drango, Kangsar, Mazur, Trewo and Beri) which were ruled by hereditary chieftains (*pönpo*); the nomadic clans of Dzachukha, Nyarong, Sangen, Gongjo and Khyungpo, also ruled by hereditary chieftains; the southern states of Bathang, Lithang, Markham, Tsawarong and Powo, which were governed by Lhasa-appointed regents; and the western states of Chamdo, Dragyab and Riwoche, which, along with Gyarong and Mili [in the far southeast], were governed by aristocratic lamas.

#### MAIN ARTISTIC CENTERS

Kham Province is and was home to a surprising diversity of painting styles. Northwestern Kham alone was home base for several significant centers of painting: Chamdo, Karshö, Lhathok, Khyungpo, and Surmang in Nangchen.

Derge in central Kham and Chatreng in the south are two other locales for excellent painters. Numerous other districts reputed for good artistry included Lingtshang, Gapa, Denma, Dzakhok, Horkhok, and Meshö.

#### MAIN PAINTING STYLES OF KHAM

As in the other Tibetan provinces, no single painting style enjoyed a monopoly in Kham in recent centuries. Two stood out as more distinctively local Kham or “eastern Tibetan.” The first was the so-called Kham style, or Khamri, a Mensar or New Menri style originally based mainly in Chamdo and the Dza River Valley. The second was the Karma Gardri, established mainly in or near Karma Kagyu religious communities. In the backgrounds of both, Chinese landscape elements were more prominent than in central-Tibetan Menri styles. Kham was also home to at least two other mainly Menri styles, including some that remained more faithful to the Menri of Ü Province and some that did not and thus possessed a more distinctive local flavor.

#### LISTS OF STYLES BY PAINTERS FROM KHAM

The painter from northwestern Kham Namgyal Gönpö Ronge (rNam rgyal mGon po Rang dge, 1945–2007) published an article on art and style in Tibet in an exhibition catalog of 1982 asserting the presence of at least three styles.

Detail of Fig. 5.8



He was one of the sons of the outstanding painter Ronge (or Rangge) Tendzin Yongdu (Rang dge bsTan 'dzin yongs 'du, ca. 1899–1982) from Khampagar (Khams pa sgar) Monastery in Lhathok, Kham, a Drukpa Kagyu establishment and seat of the Khamtrül (Khams sprul) incarnations.<sup>181</sup> These three main styles then still survived in Indian exile:<sup>182</sup>

1. The Ü style [Üri], preferred in Dharamsala (the seat of the Dalai Lama and his exile government)
2. The Karma Gardri, still followed at Rumtek, Sikkim (the seat in exile of the Karmapa)
3. The sMan gsar (New Menri) or Kham bris (Kham style), continued at Tashijong (the seat in exile of the Khamtrül)

Namgyal Ronge described (p. 332f.) the Karma Gardri under its own subtitle, saying its patrons were mainly Karma Kagyu followers. Secondly, he mentioned a sMan gsar (New Menri) style popular in Kham among patrons regardless of religious school affiliation. His father referred to that style as the “New Menri of the Dza River (rDza, i.e., Mekong River) Valley” (*rdza rgyud sman gsar*) or “Dzagyüma” (*rdza rgyud ma*).

Namgyal Ronge and the other co-authors of that catalog identified a few *thangkas* as “Menri of Kham,”<sup>183</sup> also specifying the existence of a (Kham) Menri style popular in districts of Kham such as Riwoche, Nangchen, and Gakhok (sGa khog, i.e., Gapa).<sup>184</sup> He did not mention the Menri style close to the Eri style of Ü Province that was typically patronized by Geluk monasteries, but if we count it separately from the Kham Menri of Nangchen, Gakhok, etc., that would become a fourth Kham painting style.

However, Namgyal Ronge wrongly classified one painting from the Gardri tradition of Palpung and Situ Panchen as a mixture of Gardri and Menri style,

which would have been true of Palpung paintings only in fairly recent times, such as in the painting of Thanglha Tshewang (Thang lha tshe dbang alias Karma blo gros 'od zer, 1902–ca. 1990). (Compare Figs. 5.25 and 5.26).<sup>185</sup> He also repeated the misconception that the New Menri of Ü led to the Lhasa court style, though this was not true of the Eri (Üri) of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Three similar painting styles of Kham were enumerated to me personally by a senior painter from southeastern Kham, Losang Jamyang (Blo bzang 'jam dbyangs, b. 1929, then in his late sixties). Though he came from a different artistic tradition and religious lineage (Geluk) and hailed from a distant district, he listed three of the same main Kham painting styles as Namgyal Gönpö Ronge, identifying his own main style first:

1. The Menri (close to the Eri style of Ü Province)
2. The Kham style (the Mensar or New Menri style of Kham)
3. The Karma Gardri

He asserted, moreover, that the three main styles coexisted not only in his home district of Chatreng (Cha phreng) southwest of Lithang in southeastern Kham but could also coexist in the repertoire of the same painter.<sup>186</sup> Coming from Regang (Re sgang), a village of Chatreng, he said that he could paint in all three styles.<sup>187</sup>

#### THE KARMA GARDRI STYLE IN KHAM

Let us first look at the Karma Gardri, a style that was prominently mentioned by both Khampa painters. I discussed it in some detail in a previous catalog, where I investigated especially its revival in the eighteenth century by Situ Panchen.<sup>188</sup>

The Karma Gardri was the main non-Menri style in Kham; it was mainly patronized by lay followers and lamas

of the Karma Kagyu. Two prominent communities of its artists lived at Karshö near Karma Monastery in Chamdo district and in Derge (such as near Palpung), while still others were based in Nangchen, Lingtshang, and Gapa. Nangchen in particular was a significant center, and its Gardri lineages live on.<sup>189</sup>

The Karshö painters are an unbroken line of artists who maintain the traditions of the three great founding artists of the Gardri named Tashi, continuing down to the generation of the current master Karshö Karma Gelek (Kar shod Karma dge legs, b. 1932).<sup>190</sup> Palpung Monastery, built in 1729 with the support of the Derge king Tenpa Tshering (bsTan pa tshe ring, 1713/4–1738), was considered the main locus of Situ-inspired art and Situ-designed paintings in Kham.<sup>191</sup>

Figure 5.1 exemplifies Karma Gardri art that was inspired by Situ Panchen or his immediate circle. Since Situ commissioned his main painting projects using artists from Karshö, those paintings continued in part that tradition. Yet some parts were dictated by Situ, the virtuoso patron, who was achieving something new and distinct. So the relationship between the Gardri tradition of Karshö and the Situ-inspired new Gardri works was complex and has yet to be teased out.

This painting depicts Situ Panchen Situ Chökyi Jungne, alias Tenpe Nyinche, Eighth Situ (1700–1774) as guru, and dates to about his time. Like the next painting, this portrait is in a distinctive Gardri style, probably

FIG. 5.1  
Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungne  
Derge, Kham Province, Tibet, or Lijiang, China (Karma Kagyu Monastery); mid- or late 18th century  
Gouache on cloth  
43 ¾ x 25 ¼ in. (111 x 64 cm)  
The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford (EA 1991.184)  
Literature: D. Jackson 2009, fig. 2.6. (HAR 81545)







ordered by Situ or his main disciples at his monastic seat, Palpung. It was discovered in the 1930s by Joseph Rock in Lijiang, a far-flung border district of Yunnan Province of China inhabited by the Naxi people. What could explain that provenance?

Palpung was the mother monastery of numerous Karma Kagyu establishments in the eastern Tibetan borderlands; any of them might have been visited by Situ Panchen or received paintings that he sent from Palpung. In this case we know that Situ visited Lijiang no fewer than three times.<sup>192</sup> The Naxi kings were for generations devout patrons and disciples of the Karmapas and the most prominent Karma Kagyu lamas. So this and several similar paintings, later discovered in Lijiang by Joseph Rock (and now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), may well have been brought by Situ personally to Lijiang or sent there from Palpung. (I think it less likely that they were painted by expert artists in Lijiang who had mastered that style at Palpung.)

The landscape is quite spacious, painted with thin washes of color. Though highly asymmetrical with mountains and a pool of water to the right, its composition is balanced by a simple mountain ridge with one cloud to the left. Very different rocky crags and flowering trees are depicted to the right and left of the main figure. Except for a few jewels, the foreground is empty. But in the middle ground where most of the green is applied to the landscape meadows, numerous small flowers appear, perhaps to avoid letting the painting become too empty.

The placement of the sacred figures is symmetrical, with the main figure sitting astride the central vertical axis. The three deities of long life in the sky have round body nimbuses, and their outer edges are faint, subtle rainbows. The central god of wealth below has a transparent body nimbus. Gaps in the

meadow landscape around the central throne are filled with regularly spaced flowering plants of several different types, all about the same size.

Figure 5.2 depicts Situ Panchen again, here in a large series portraying the successive Karmapas and other gurus of the Karma Kagyu Mahāmudrā lineage. (The set in Situ's time consisted of thirty-three *thangkas*, the last of which portrayed the Thirteenth Karmapa Dūdül Dorje [1733–1797].) The Palpung inscription here names him “Mi dbang Sa skyong Kar ma Si tu bSod nams mgon po lhun grub,” not one of his well-known names.<sup>193</sup> This painting portrays Situ as a mature lama holding a volume of the sacred scriptures on his lap. The goddess White Tārā above him was probably placed there with prayers for his longevity. He is pictured as a venerable gray-haired master, presumably in about his sixties.

Situ sits upon an ornate Chinese style throne. A series of random looking clouds forms a natural backdrop for that throne. Behind him lies a complicated landscape featuring to his right a flowing river, two distant cloud-wreathed peaks, and clouds of many shapes and colors. The clouds above the peaks are faint and misty, their edges finished with vague bands of thin gray or indigo back-painting, and they conceal a dragon, whose head, tail, and limbs peep out through the gaps. The distant pine trees are expertly painted, their details somewhat faint. The sky is pale blue; the sense of luminosity is increased by Situ's transparent head nimbus and that of one of his students. Gaps in the meadow landscape in the foreground and to the right of the throne are filled with regularly spaced large tufts of grass and small flowering bushes, all about the same size (not smaller in the distance).

One of Situ's main artist disciples in later years, Karshö Karma Tashi, probably designed and painted this famous set. His combined role as painter

and respectful disciple of the Thirteenth Karmapa is shown by a small self-portrait inserted as a minor figure in the foreground of the last painting in his set.<sup>194</sup> Painting number thirty-three in the set bears an inscription in golden letters, barely noticeable in the excellent landscape.<sup>195</sup> It somewhat cryptically records, “The maker of the work was named Mangga” (*ri mo 'i byed po mang ga 'i ming*). Mangga turns out to be Sanskrit for the Tibetan name Tashi. All in all, I feel that the Karshö dominates stylistically in this early painting of this classic set.

Figure 5.3 is a copy of the same composition by a Karshö painter working about a century later. Though that later artist has copied an earlier version very closely, probably with the help of a tracing, he also introduces a few slight improvements in the composition. The new version adds a few centimeters of space to the sky. Its composition is less crowded, with more sky behind the goddess White Tārā and above Yamāntaka. The painter of this later copy (Fig. 5.3) had access to an accurate tracing of the painting, but did not adhere carefully to the earlier version such as Fig. 5.2. That would account for the disappearance of the halo on one of Situ's disciples, a subtle feature that would have been hardly visible when traced.

Figure 5.3 departs in some other details from the earlier painting, with the two distant peaks to the right, above the roiling river, the same green as most of the landscape. Only a few clusters of flowering bushes or plants are added to the meadows in the middle ground, mainly at the base of a line of clouds beneath the river. The trees and bushes on a distant hilltop are darker and more clearly defined, with tree limbs competently built up, through the use of darker dots of ink. The cluster of blue clouds under White Tārā is no longer blue. The other subtle cloud colors of Figure 5.2 are lost. The dragon is more obvious, not





FIG. 5.2  
Situ Panchen, the Great Transmitter of his  
Lineage  
Kham Province, Tibet; late 18th century  
38 ½ x 23 ½ in. (97.8 x 59.7 cm)  
Purchased from the Collection of Navin  
Kumar, New York  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2003.29.2 (HAR 65279)  
Literature: D. Jackson 2009, Figs. 2.4 and  
9.32b.



FIG. 5.3  
Situ Panchen as Thirty-second Master of the  
Lineage, from the Rumtek Set  
Kham Province, Tibet; early 20th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Photograph by David Lewiston  
Literature: Cf. Palpung set, Yang 2007,  
p. 164 (main figure wrongly identified as  
Padma kun bzang); and D. Jackson 2009,  
Fig. 9.32a.



the faint blue and green as before. As a minor improvement, the gold throne has been shaded a bit, making it easier to differentiate from the golden color of Situ's lower robes. The table before him is different, no longer red with a pink top. In general the palette has become simpler and less intense; the later painter features more green in the landscape and more white in the clouds.

Figure 5.3 belongs to a set of paintings brought to India by the Ninth Sanggye Nyenpa Trulku (Sangs rgyas mnyan pa sPrul sku bShad sgrub bstan pa'i nyi ma, 1897–1962) from Benchen Monastery in the Gapa district of Kham.<sup>196</sup> It now survives at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim. The Rumtek set was a later copy attributed to Gönpö Dorje (mGon po rdo rje) of Karshö, a painter of note who flourished in the early twentieth century. He worked toward the end of the Fifteenth Karmapa's life and was assisted in large projects by many helpers. His uncle and teacher was the prominent Karshö painter Pema Rabten (Kar shod pa Padma rab brtan). A Karshö painter by that name is also mentioned by Gega Lama in his historical sketch, as a teacher of his own teacher, Thanglha Tshewang.

In this series, the central figures were relatively larger in relation to the overall size of the composition, compared with most Situ compositions (Cf. 5.1). The main figures were often portrayed in partial profile, and ornate and very detailed elements from Chinese landscape painting filled much of the background.

Another example of the coloring and palette of a later Karshö painting is a *thangka* bearing an inscription that says it depicts a "Situ Tradition" (*si tu'i lugs*); it belongs to a painting set of the eighty-four great adepts in eleven paintings. (See D. Jackson 2009, Fig. 8.1). The set goes back to an original designed by Situ Panchen.

Figure 5.4 depicts the lama of Kham Jamgön Kongtrül ('Jam mgon Kong sprul



Blo gros mtha' yas, 1813–1899), one of the most eminent lamas of the Karma Kagyu school in the second half of the nineteenth century. Though he was one of the Non-sectarian (Ris med) Movement's founders in Derge, Kongtrül as a mature lama was mainly based at Palpung or its retreats, so we might expect that he

FIG. 5.4  
Jamgön Kongtrül as Guru of the Karma Kagyü  
Kham Province, Tibet; early 20th century  
36 x 22 ½ in. (91.4 x 57.2 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2003.25.2 (HAR 65265)



patronized the Karma Gardri descending from Situ. But did this portrait of him come from Palpung or nearby Derge?

We cannot say with certainty. Kongtrül was the main guru of his school's teachings to the next generation, including the Fifteenth Karmapa (Khakhyab Dorje, 1871–1922). Indeed, in this painting Kongtrül may appear precisely in his role as main lineal guru of his generation in the Karma Kagyu school.

Stylistically, the painting belongs to the Karma Gardri school of Kham around the early twentieth century. It features a somewhat jumbled cluster of clouds with some large trees that were painted behind the main throne as a natural backdrop. The clouds have become somewhat hardened and schematized compared with the previous three paintings. The shading of the clouds behind the deities in the sky and behind Kongtrül's own throne is distinctive. With its clusters of four dark-blue indigo thumbnail-shaped shaded indentations, these clouds are a hallmark of the Gardri in Kongtrül's era, just as the three-lobed cumulus clouds with their "cloud-eye" indentations were identifying marks for the Eri style of Ü Province. Only two head nimbuses are transparent—otherwise all head and body nimbuses are painted solid colors. Somehow, in comparison with the preceding three paintings, the palette has become a little bit closer to the Menri—the landscape overall seems greener, the sky darker, and the clouds whiter.

Figure 5.5 illustrates several of the many cloud types used by the recent Karma Gardri painter Gega Lama, a student of Thanglha Tshewang. They include some that are typically Gardri (top left and right), such as the "cloud-grid" lattice. Some of the others were also typical of various Menri styles, including even cumulus clouds with deep cavities (top center and middle)—though they are not exactly the same as the three-lobed clouds of the Eri.



FIG. 5.5  
Detail of Clouds by Gega Lama, a Student of Thanglha Tshewang  
Darjeeling, India; early 1980s  
Ink drawing published by photo offset  
Dimensions unknown  
After: Gega Lama 1983, vol. 2, p. 198.

Figure 5.6 depicts the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje (1556–1603). In the absence of a colophon-like inscription, the statue cannot be easily attributed to some particular part of Tibet. Since Kham was the main Karma Kagyu seat after the 1640s, it would most probably have come from there if it dated after then. But if made in preceding generations, it could just as easily have come from central Tibet, for the school still flourished in both Ü and Tsang Provinces. I cannot say which was more likely, though experts in sculpture probably could.

#### THE KHAM STYLE OR KHAMRI

When Kham artists spoke in the twentieth century of a "Kham Style" or Khamri (*kham sbris*), they meant a New Menri style that had spread in Kham from Chamdo. That was the tradition of Chamdo Phurbu Tshering (Chab mdo Phur bu tshe ring), an artist who flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>197</sup> Many subsequent



FIG. 5.6  
The Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje  
Tibet; ca. 17th century  
Gilt copper alloy  
7 ½ x 7 x 6 ¾ in. (19 x 17.8 x 16.2 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2002.15.1 (HAR 65099)

Kham Mensar painters followed a hybrid style, incorporating a few features of the Karma Gardri into a basically New Menri style.

#### CONTRASTING THE KHAMRI WITH THE GARDRI

Let us compare examples of that second distinctly local painting style of Kham, the Khamri. Figures 5.7 and 5.8 depict the same subject, Tārā Protecting from the Eight Perils, both dating to the nineteenth-century. The compositions of both derive from the same original painting that was planned or commissioned in the eighteenth century by Situ Panchen. (In a previous catalog I presented this composition among the single-painting commissions of Situ.)<sup>198</sup> Therefore, both contain the typical Situ Panchen architectural details in the background landscape, especially the courtyards and roofs. (I have presented three renderings of another Situ composition above as Figs. 2.1 through 2.3, each in a different style of Kham.)



Figure 5.7 exemplifies the New Menri of Kham. The landscape blues and greens are fairly deep and intense—much deeper than those in the later Gardri rendering of the same Situ Panchen commission (Fig. 5.8). Some elements, such as the blue-green crags to the main figure’s right and the flowers and leaves beneath her lotus seat, derive from a Menri style. The clouds on the horizon and landscape are light blue or green, without any pink clouds. The clouds include many standard Menri types, including three-lobed cumulus clouds, some with “cloud eyes.” Yet there are also many clouds of a type without holes but that have two swirling projections near the center, which anticipates a New Menri type also seen in Figures 5.7 and 5.9 (essentially the same as the Amdo cloud shading in Fig. 6.6.). Still, the sky is far too light to be in the New Menri of Tsang.

In the sky above left the painter has added to the Situ composition dramatic mystical effulgence—twisting strands of rainbow-lights that swirl up from a small golden buddha seated just above the central Tārā. (We first saw those unusual lights in Fig. 4.23, noting their presence also in the Derge block-printed set of the Buddha’s Twelve Great Deeds.) The lights split into three main rays that seem to support and be intertwined with the clouds below the small floating Tārā. (The small buddha, too, radiates spiritual energy thanks to six subtly painted mystic rainbow lights that glow around him.) Every figure has received a boldly colored head nimbus.

One feature unusual for any Menri style is the see-through strip painted between Tārā’s solid orange inner body nimbus and outer rainbow. There we find peeking through a series of Gardri clouds shaded by indigo washes. The shading of the tiny clouds on the horizon follows the Gardri. The other clouds are painted as in the Menri, but the shading of the cloud

outer edges marks this as a hybrid style of painting. (The Gardri artists regularly paint a faint indigo back-shading border around clouds, which central-Tibetan Menri artists strictly avoid.)

Figure 5.7 represents a New Menri of Kham, with a few mostly subtle Gardri elements making it a Menri/Gardri hybrid. It probably continues in the school of Chamdo Phurba Tshering. (The connection between the New Menri styles of Tsang and Kham has yet to be elucidated.)

Figure 5.8 likewise shows Green Tārā as savior from the eight perils. Though also clearly Kham art of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, it embodies more purely the Karma Gardri style of Situ Panchen, who commissioned the original. If we compare it more closely with Figure 5.7, we see that the preceding painter has rearranged and recast many elements of the composition; for instance, he has moved the central Tārā lower on the central axis, creating more green landscape space above her. He moved the upper two Tārās much higher in the sky. One of the eight minor Tārās is absent, while one has been moved to immediately below the main figure. Both paintings retain the original round body nimbuses for their main figure and, Figure 5.7 keeps a round body nimbus for four of the upper smaller Tārās, though in two cases adding a deep blue inner nimbus, with solid outer rainbow strips like the central figure. But in the remaining three small Tārās the round body nimbuses have been dropped in favor of more usual Menri nimbuses. Clusters of clouds have been added below six of the seven minor Tārās.

Figure 5.8 was probably painted in Kham between about 1750 and 1850. The tonality is very light, and the colors are applied in most places in thin coats. The sky and green landscape are light and airy. The body nimbuses of the main and minor Tārās are white

or pastel orange or pink (compare the two solid ultramarine nimbuses of two smaller Tārās in Fig. 5.7). The feeling of luminous clarity is enhanced by the faint rainbow painted outside the outer edge of the main figure’s white body nimbus (compare the rainbow painted with solid paints in Fig. 5.7). A series of five large three-lobed clouds forms a backdrop for the top half of that body nimbus. The clouds have the usual Gardri shapes, but even more typical is their finishing by means of faint indigo back-shading.

## A PORTRAIT OF A NYINGMA LAMA

Figure 5.9 depicts an ordained lama of the Nyingma tradition in the Khamri style. The unbalanced composition is painted with relatively dark colors applied mostly in thin coats. Its main figure and many minor ones (except for two buddhas, a red deity, and a standing Padmasambhava with two accompanying goddesses) are shown in three-quarter profile. One prominent color of clouds is pink (both in the sky and landscape), and we also see gold outlining in the clouds, top left. Note the dramatically twisting gold-outlined mystic rainbow lights that swirl up from the lama’s offering table, splitting into two main rays leading to the deities above to the right and left. Few three-lobed cumulus clouds are employed. Some, with trailing tails, form a backdrop to the throne of the main figure. They are distinctive for their swirling centers that do not have deep holes: they protrude toward the viewer in two or three raised, twisted extensions.

All in all, Figure 5.9 thus seems to be an example of the Kham New Menri. Still, the cloud shading and use of a thin band of faint indigo back-shading around their borders reveal the presence of slight Gardri elements. It thus exemplifies (like Fig. 5.7) a hybrid Menri/Gardri style of Kham.





FIG. 5.7  
 Tārā Saving from the Eight Perils  
 Kham Province, Tibet; late 19th century  
 25 ¼ x 17 in. (64.1 x 43.2 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 F1997.15.1 (HAR 237)  
 Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
 no. 38, p. 207.





FIG. 5.8  
Tārā Saving from the Eight Perils  
Derge, Kham Province, Tibet; late 18th or  
early 19th century  
29 ½ x 21 ⅞ in. (74.9 x 53.7 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.524 (HAR 997)  
Literature: D. Jackson 2009, fig. 6.1.





FIG. 5.9  
 Lama of the Nyingma Tradition  
 Kham Province, Tibet; 19th century  
 28 3/4 x 18 1/8 in. (72.7 x 46 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2006.66.421 (HAR 869)



## PAINTINGS OF THE DRUKPA KAGYU AT LHATHOK

To the extent that the two examples of the Khamri, Figures 5.7 and 5.9, are typical, the style was a New Menri style that often included a few Gardri elements. It predominated in many parts of Kham by the early twentieth century. It was founded and popularized in the mid- to late nineteenth century by Chamdo Phurbu Tshering and his disciples, the protagonists of a style sometimes also called the “New Menri of the Dza Valley” (*rDza rgyud sman gsar*).<sup>199</sup> But it was only one of several Menri styles in Kham. One place where the Dza- (i.e., Mekong River) Valley or Chamdo-based New Menri took root by the mid- or late nineteenth century was Khampa Gar Monastery, a Drukpa Kagyu monastery in Lhathok (in present-day Chamdo county, northeast of Chamdo town). It was, like Karma, well endowed with artists and demanding lama patrons.

Figure 5.10 does not exemplify the later New Menri (Khamri). With its solid dark blue sky and non-Eri clouds, it is stylistically not too far from a Menri style of Tsang, as we might expect if there had been artistic contact with Ralung (Rwa lung), the Drukpa seat in Tsang. Most clouds are pale blue and green, though a few are pink. Dull green predominates.

The painting depicts Milarepa with a lineage of Rechungpa; it probably came from Khampa Gar Monastery, the seat of the Khamtrül incarnate lamas.

The last five masters in this lineage are:

- Karma Shanakpa (Zhwa nags pa, Black-hat Karmapa)
- Drukpa Thamje Khyenpa (’Brug pa Thams cad mkhyen pa, the Omniscient Drukpa)
- Kusho Yangdzin (sKu zhabs Yang ’dzin [probably Yongs ’dzin], “His Excellency, the Tutor”)
- Kunga Tendzin (Kun dga’ bstan



- ’dzin, Third Khamtrül, 1680–1728)
- Drubgyü Nyima (sGrub brgyud nyi ma, Fifth Khamtrül, 1781–1847)

(The lineage for unknown reasons skips the fourth Khamtrül.) The final master, Drubgyü Nyima (shown at the center of the bottom register), flourished in the first half of the nineteenth century, probably the time the painting was made. His disciple sits reverently to his right, offering a ritual mandala, which floats in the space between them.

Several small glacier peaks form the background for minor deities below

FIG. 5.10  
Milarepa with a Lineage of Rechungpa  
Lhathok, northwestern Kham Province,  
Tibet; early or mid-19th century  
29 1/8 x 21 3/8 in. (74.2 x 55 cm)  
Hahn Cultural Foundation  
Literature: K. Tanaka 2005, no. 45.



to the right and left. The painter has skillfully hidden animal shapes within the rocky crags to the right and left of Milarepa. The most intricate mountains and clouds surround the local mountain deity in the bottom-left corner, and above that white deity floats a guru painted on a golden orb (a rare device that recurs in the next painting). It is a careful work of Drukpa Kagyu art in Kham; note the exquisite lotus brocade designs even on Milarepa's white ascetic robe.

The style seems to be a local conservative Menri that was practiced in Lhathok a generation or two before the advent of the Khamri. It may be related to the "Old Menri" (*smān rnying*) painting style that the Third Khamtrül Kunga Tendzin used when painting a set of the Eight Manifestations of Padmasambhava, according to Kathok Situ, who saw the paintings at Karma Monastery.<sup>200</sup> The brilliance of the Drukpa Kagyu artists and lama connoisseur-patrons from this district of Kham is not yet well known. I find it remarkable that the second of the three greatest artists of the Gardri (all with the name Tashi), namely Chö Tashi (Chos bkra shis, also known as rDza stod Lha chen Dharma Manggala, flourished early eighteenth century), was a Drukpa Kagyu monk from the upper Dza Valley (rDza stod) who painted a Drukpa guru lineage set at Khampa Gar for Khamtrül Kunga Tenphel or Kunga Tendzin.<sup>201</sup>

Figure 5.11 exemplifies a very different style—a New Menri/Gardri hybrid style of nineteenth-century Kham. It portrays Namkha Palzang (Nam mkha' dpal bzang, 1398–1425), a lama of the Drukpa Kagyu of Ralung who transmitted the main instructions of his school. This painting belongs to a large set depicting the Drukpa Kagyu lineage.<sup>202</sup> Drukpa Namkha Palzang was the eldest son of the Drukpa lama Yeshe Rinchen. Considered to be an emanation of the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi (his epithet was accordingly "gSang bdag"), he is counted as the second of the three

"prince-abbots" of Ralung. He died at the age of twenty-eight.

The sky and clouds impart a markedly Kham flavor to the work: the base color of the sky is lighter than in Figure 5.10, and thin indigo back-shading strips outline the clumps of landscape clouds, which are here brighter and more prominent. The clouds are variously shaped and have five or six base colors (though not pink). The clouds behind the main figure are three-lobed cumulus with trailing tails. Their upper puffs are shaded with the usual Gardri-like indigo shadows, but the centers are filled not with Menri shaded holes but with two or three swirling spirals that jut out almost like swirls of ice cream.

Once again, the painter has taken great pains with every detail, hiding an animal (nearest the snow lion) and other forms (e.g., a parasol and vase) within the most prominent outcropping of rocks of the painting, above left. Except for a buddha and a few deities, the painting depicts almost all human figures in partial profile. The main figure is placed unexpectedly on the left side of the central axis, though it would have balanced the composition better to place him to the right. (The placement of the main figures in the adjoining *thangkas* of the set may have been unusual and called for this odd arrangement.)

The painting features an unusually large, wide, and prominent white glacier peak (with a snow lion curled up on it to the left) above the golden-roofed pagoda where the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi stands. A guru or deity floats in the sky within a golden orb to the left of the glacier.<sup>203</sup> Many wild birds and animals frolic peacefully here and there in the landscape. In the bottom-left corner, a bodhisattva-like mountain recluse is shown protecting a deer from the arrows of a hunter.

Figure 5.12 evidently exemplifies a closely related New Menri/Gardri fusion style of northwestern Kham. Four

of the eighty-four great adepts of the Indian Vajrayana are shown following the canonical work by Vajrāsana.<sup>204</sup> Each adept is named and praised with a golden inscription. Three of the four adepts are shown in a frontal pose. One adept, Virupa in the bottom right, looks up at a sun (not depicted); he is arresting it in the sky as an outer expression of his immense inner yogic powers, symbolized by a thin golden line or sunbeam from his fingertip. (Elsewhere in the same set as Fig. 5.12, golden orbs are used for insets holding tutelary deities that appear to each adept. See R. Linrothe ed. 2006, cat. nos. 23 and 25.)

Except for the sky and green fields of the landscape, the use elsewhere of solid pigments is typical of many Menri paintings, including head nimbuses, clouds, and a body of wave-agitated water in the bottom-left corner. The blue-green rocky crags, large leaves, and golden-roofed Chinese temples are those of a New Menri. The clouds are colored very pale shades of blue, green, or, in the upper left, yellowish brown. Yet the clouds that float in front of faint skies or landscapes are dimly back-shaded with a thin strip of indigo, in the Gardri manner. (In front of temples and rocks, the painter did not back-shade the clouds.) The clouds below the adept on the upper left have no dark holes or indentations in their centers. Instead, two or three swirling spirals project out, a cloud feature that we saw in Figure 5.11 (and recurs later in this set) but is generally not very common behind a central main lama.<sup>205</sup>

Three spirals can occur in the centers of three-lobed cumulus clouds in all Menri traditions. We find them in both Figures 5.13 and 5.14, drawings of the guardians of the four directions with a cluster of clouds behind them. Drawn as examples of correct proportion by prominent painters of the Eri and Tsangri, here the spirals are shorter and less prominent than they become in the Kham Menri traditions represented by





FIG. 5.11  
 Namkha Palzang, Lama of the Drukpa  
 Kagyü  
 Lhathok, northwestern Kham Province,  
 Tibet; 19th century  
 34 ½ x 22 ½ in. (87.6 x 57.2 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2003.9.1 (HAR 65193)





FIG. 5.12  
 Four Great Tantric Adepts of India  
 Northwestern Kham Province, Tibet; 19th  
 century  
 32.48 x 21.97 in. (82.5 x 55.8 cm)  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
 Gift of John Goellet (67.834)  
 (HAR 87232)  
 Photograph © 2012 Museum of Fine Arts,  
 Boston  
 Literature: L. Rinrothe ed. 2006, cat. no. 21.





FIG. 5.13  
Drawing of Dhrāṣṭra (Yul 'khor srung),  
Guardian of the East, drawn by a prominent  
exponent of the Eri style from Lhasa, Tenpa  
Rabten  
After: Tenpa Rabten 1996, fig. 87.



FIG. 5.14  
Drawing of Virūpākṣa (sPyan mi  
bzang), Guardian of the West, drawn  
by a prominent exponent of the Tsangri  
style from Tashilhunpo, Kachen Losang  
Phüntshok  
After: Kachen Losang Phüntshok 1993,  
p. 104.

Figures 5.11 and 5.12. In both drawings the clouds alternate with or are mixed with the prototypical Menri cloud type: three-lobed cumulus with a “cloud eye.” (For an Eri painted version of the cloud of Fig. 5.13, see Fig. 7.9.)

Figure 5.15 shows that paintings in the same distinctive style as Figure 5.12 were commissioned not just by Drukpa Kagyu masters of Lathok but also by major Geluk lamas in parts of western Kham including Dragyab. The photograph depicts a painting still hanging in the mother monastery (Magön) of Dragyab, a western Kham principality that was an enclave of Geluk dominance. Dragyab is now the adjoining county southeast of Chamdo, downstream in the Dzachu (Mekong River) Valley. Though not all the details can be determined, the painting clearly embodies a Kham hybrid style close to those of Figures 5.11 and 5.12.

#### ANOTHER CONTRASTING PAIR OF PAINTINGS

In Figure 5.16 we meet once again a Menri/Gardri fusion of western or northwestern Kham. Here one of Situ Panchen's compositions has been more extensively reworked in a different style. The original composition was Situ's Eight Great Adepts in one painting. Here the composition has been recast, with figures rearranged, the sky filled with not one but two adepts floating in space. The central figure is smaller, while the eight adepts are larger (than in Fig. 5.11).

The *thangka* is painted with thicker, more opaque colors, and, the landscape details (mountains and clouds on the horizon) remain closer to the original Gardri style with their thin washes of colors. The artist who repainted the composition thus knew and employed Kham New Menri and Karma Gardri styles. Perhaps he practiced a lesser known predecessor to the style championed in the mid- to late nineteenth



FIG. 5.15  
Painting of Great Adepts  
Dragyab Magön, Kham Province, Tibet; ca.  
19th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Photograph by Andreas Gruschke, ca. 2000  
Literature: A. Gruschke 2004a, Kham  
vol. 1, p. 221, fig. 142.

century by Phurbu Tshering of Chamdo and his disciples. He also preserved and deftly employed many Gardri effects; prominent here are the see-through head nimbuses of all adepts and the sky with clouds.<sup>206</sup> He also prominently added two bundles of twisting mystic rainbow lights, one emitting from behind the central figure's head nimbus and splitting into four. The second one twirls up above left from behind a tree, where an adept magically floats through space.

The sky has been left a soft creamy brown, like the ground color of a Chinese silk painting (*si thang*). The clouds are seven different colors and shapes, including, in the upper-right corner, white with faint red, yellow, and blue highlights, as occasionally seen in Gardri paintings (Cf. Fig. 5.2, top left).





FIG. 5.16  
Mensar Repainting of Situ's  
Padmasambhava and the Eight Great Adepts  
Kham Province, Tibet; early or mid-19th  
century  
45 ½ x 29 ½ in. (115.6 x 74.9 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2007.13.1 (HAR 65780)  
Literature: D. Jackson 2009, no. 7.20.



Two very unusual touches are the red Chinese carved throne and green jade lotus petals, somewhat reminiscent of the Tenth Karmapa's depiction of carved green jade in thrones.

The cotton ground of this painting has been primed with a very thick layer as a preparation for the more thickly applied pigments. The canvas has been stitched together from four pieces of cotton cloth. The painting demonstrates the stylistic riches available to Khampa painters in the early or mid-nineteenth century. I suspect it embodies the contributions of an outstanding artist who worked after Situ but before Phurbu Tshering and his New Menri of Kham.

Figure 5.17 depicts the same Eight Great Adepts in a Karma Gardri style. Here we see the same composition as in Figure 5.16, but painted in a style closer to the Karma Kagyu of Palpung Monastery. This second version is a study in understated elegance. The colors are pale—even by the standards of the Karma Gardri—most notably the sky is a field of off-white like linen. The nimbus of the main figure is an unusual tone of pale yellowish brown. The base color of the main throne is a dull brownish purple.

In a few places the artist does indulge himself with richer bursts of colors, such as in the blue and green dragons that are backrests of the throne. But even these are muted because they blend into the adjoining landscape. (In Figure 5.16, by contrast, the entire throne and backrest were painted with a base color of red. Though less colorful, it helped balance the exuberance of colors elsewhere in the painting.)

#### PRESENT-DAY EXPONENTS OF THE KHAM NEW MENRI

As noteworthy proponents of the Kham Mensar or “Khamri” style in the present day, we should mention that two families who directly descended from the



Drupatshang (Gru pa tshang) family still flourish in western Kham. According to Könchok Tendzin, they are represented by Lhabso Sönam Delek (Lha bzo bSod nams dge legs), fourth generation in the family lineage after Drupa Phurbu Tshering (Gru pa Phur bu tshe ring), and Lhabso Chökyong Tshering (Lha bzo Chos skyong tshe ring), fifth generation in that same lineage.<sup>207</sup> Coincidentally, the same Chökyong Tshering was also

FIG. 5.17  
Padmasambhava and the Eight Great Adepts  
in the Gardri Style  
Kham Province; late 18th or 19th century  
27  $\frac{1}{16}$  x 17  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. (70 x 44.6 cm)  
Collection of Samuel Bercholz  
(HAR 81409)  
Literature: D. Jackson 2009, fig. 7.2



photographed while at work in Chamdo's old town by Andreas Gruschke (as reproduced in Figure 5.18).

Figure 5.19 exemplifies the work of Pema Namdol Thaye, a painter who worked basically in a similar Kham Mensar style of the late twentieth century and continues to paint outside Tibet. If we examine his proportional drawings for their spacing of the head ornaments, we see that in some cases he spaces them evenly.<sup>208</sup> Yet in other cases he groups the front three elements more closely together.<sup>209</sup>

Figure 5.20 exemplifies typical clouds and landscape elements of the artist Pema Namdol Thaye. One type of cloud is a three-lobed cumulus cloud with tails that trail down to the left at a slant. The clouds are noteworthy for lacking the typical Eri shaded "cloud-eye." The same clouds are found in fully shaded form (combined with other cloud types) in Figure 5.19. Here he shades the two side lobes darker than the central one.

We can hardly overlook the

mystical rainbow lights dancing and twirling in the sky behind both deities. Behind the main deity they break up on both sides into nine or ten colored rays, some nearly invisible. The smaller rainbow lights around the deity Samantabhadra above split up into three on each side, interweaving with a complicated cloud lattice.

In Figure 5.19, the clouds are not very typical of the Kham New Menri, but they are also not the usual Menri, Tsangri, or Gardri types. The clouds drawn in Figure 5.20, above left, are a more typical Khamri type, with the beginning of two short spirals instead of Eri "cloud eyes."

#### PAINTINGS FROM DERGE

The kingdom of Derge lay in central Kham just east of the Mekong River. Thanks in part to the religious patronage of its illustrious kings in the eighteenth century, it exerted, for its size, a disproportionately large influence spiritually and culturally in both Kham and Tibet. Palpung Monastery, a later main seat of the Karma Kagyu in Kham (founded by Situ Panchen), was also artistically important, though its local Gardri styles never dominated eastern Tibet. Some of



FIG. 5.19  
Vajrasattva  
Tibet; 1980s or early 1990s  
Painted by Tsarak Pema Namdol Thaye  
Dimensions unknown  
After: Tsarak Pema Namdol Thaye 1997,  
fig. 315



FIG. 5.20  
Scenery Elements of a Khamri Style  
Drawn by Pema Namdol Thaye  
Drawing published by photo offset  
After: Tsarak Pema Namdol Thaye 1987,  
p. 204, "scenery."

FIG. 5.18  
Chökyong Tshering of Chamdo at Work  
Chamdo  
Photograph by Andreas Gruschke, ca. 2000  
Literature: A. Gruschke 2004a, p. 184,  
picture no. 34.





the *thangka* compositions from Derge's printing house, the famed Parkhang Chenmo, were local and national classics. Those printing blocks were a venue by which not only the Karma Gardri but also the Khamri Mensar art gained in currency and prestige, since about the late nineteenth century.

Several paintings have been wrongly attributed by Western scholars to Derge or identified as in a "Derge style." Figure 5.21, for example, depicts Guru Rinpoche's Copper-Mountain Paradise. One scholar attributed it to nineteenth-century successors of the Menri school in Derge of Shuchen Tshultrim Rinchen (Zhu chen Tshul khrim rin chen, 1697–1774), a scholar-artist who came from nearby Denma (lDan ma).<sup>210</sup> But Menri schools do not allow a painter to shade the outer edges of clouds with indigo or to leave a horizon unpainted in this way. This is clearly a later Karma Gardri style of Kham, though with a landscape that is darker green than normal.

Figure 5.22 (discussed as Fig. 1.8) depicts the great scholar and artist overseeing a painting project, in one episode in the life of the Ngor Abbot Rinchen Migyur Gyaltsen. Because of its narrative subject matter it is difficult to compare with iconic paintings. It may be a Kham Menri composition, basically, and my guess is that it came from the circle of Shuchen. He was born into a family of Menri painters from Denma and followed that tradition. Yet large parts of the sky and green landscape were left unpainted, which is not typical of Menri traditions except in Menri/Gardri hybrids.

Shuchen's main collaborators on painting projects, Lhaga (Lha dga') and his brother (who are shown in this painting), were both from Karma Lhateng (Lha steng) and would be expected to have basically followed a style of Karshö (Kar shod), i.e., a Karma Gardri style still preserved by families



of painters near Karma Monastery in Chamdo county.<sup>211</sup> Yet that is not the style in Figure 5.22. Perhaps they would have modified their landscape so when painting for a learned Menri patron. Did the artists paint themselves here? If the caption verses prove to be by Shuchen, we can consider this painting to exemplify a specific kind of Derge Menri/Gardi hybrid that was commissioned by Shuchen and his circle.<sup>212</sup>

FIG. 5.21  
Padmasambhava's Copper-Mountain  
Paradise  
Kham Province; 19th century  
35 ¼ x 22 ¾ in. (89.5 x 57.8 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.8.2 (HAR 111)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 192, p. 474f.





FIG. 5.22  
Episodes from the Life of the Ngor Abbot  
Rinchen Migyur Gyaltsen  
Kham Province, Tibet; late 18th century  
31 1/8 x 23 in. (79 x 58.5 cm)  
Collection R.R.E.  
Literature: D. Jackson 1996, pl. 63.

#### OTHER DOUBTFUL ATTRIBUTIONS TO DERGE

Though Figure 5.23 has previously been attributed to nineteenth-century Kham, possibly around Derge, it does not exemplify any of the known styles of Kham.<sup>213</sup> It portrays Virupa and the Path with the Fruit (Lam 'bras) Refuge Tree of the Sakya sect, together with two different lineages of the *Path with the Fruit*: the "Exposition for Disciples" (*sLob bshad*) to the viewer's left and the "Exposition for the Assembly" (*Tshogs bshad*) to the right, which come together in the main

lama below. Something has gone amiss with the numbering of the later figures in its previous publication.<sup>214</sup> Both lineages culminate in guru number 38, a minor, perhaps local Sakya lama named Könchok Lotrö Palzangpo (rJe bla ma dKon mchog blo gros dpal bzang po), who flourished in about 1900. The two lineages thus end as in diagram [A].

The painting has a strange blue-gray palette. Its sky is divided into three horizontal strips—the top and bottom ones are very pale grayish blue, while the middle is deep cobalt or ultramarine blue. Such a sky is unknown in Kham painting. The gray coloring of the green meadows of the landscape is also odd. The band of clouds in the sky includes many with three whirls or spirals in their centers, as we noticed in several non-Gardri paintings of Kham, while the rows of clouds lower in the landscape are simpler.

Fields of solid blue, in particular, are rarely if ever found in skies of *thangkas* from Derge. If this basically Menri painting is not from Kham, it might come from a remote center of art in southern Amdo, perhaps a nomadic district where the central Tibetan malachite and azurite blues and greens were rare. (I once saw a similar divided sky with a light gray-blue strip above the intense blue, in a Bon painting probably from Amdo.)<sup>215</sup>

Though I plan to document Figure 5.23 in more detail in the future, we should note that the last few gurus of the left side are from a special tradition within the Sakya School known as the Tsharpa. The lineage on the right includes number 36, Tendzin Nyendrak (bsTan 'dzin snyan grags, 1813?–1884), the Zimwok Trulku of Nalendra. His home monastery in central Tibet had an Amdo regional dormitory and possessed a handful of branch monasteries in Amdo, all in southern nomadic districts. That fact may help us narrow things down geographically. In Dzöge



(mDzod dge) was the largest Nalendra branch monastery, Diphu Chöje Gönpa (Dhih phu Chos rje dgon pa), which had two branches in Ngapa: Derge Gönpa (dGe legs gter mdzod gling) and Sagang Gönpa (Sa sgang dgon pa Bsam gtan ‘phel rgyas gling). This highly unusual Sakya painting was very possibly commissioned in one of them, but that will only be confirmed when we identify the last two lamas in the lineage.

The presence of the same synthetic blue in the sky of yet another painting was taken by Marilyn Rhie “to be a trademark of Derge painting of approximately the second half of the nineteenth century.”<sup>216</sup> Rhie evidently based her other attributions to “Derge” in her *Worlds of Transformation* to no. 11, “Birth of Śākyamuni Buddha.”<sup>217</sup> Other paintings share its solid deep blue sky.<sup>218</sup> I cannot identify these somewhat provincial-looking paintings, though they are certainly not in the two styles typically patronized by the kings and leading lamas of Derge in the last century and a half, namely the New Menri style, which spread from Chamdo, or the local Situ-inspired Karma Gardri.

Regarding Figure 5.24, Rhie asserted, “Touches of ultramarine could indicate a link with Derge schools,” though this *thangka* is surely painted in the Karma Gardri style of Kham. It could be from Derge or from another center of Karma Kagyu patronage in Kham.<sup>219</sup> Note that the shapes and shading of the clouds are distinctively Gardri. A series of large three-lobed clouds forms a backdrop for the outer edge of the central body nimbus, with its transparent rainbow edge. The other clouds have typical Gardri shapes. All clouds have the usual indigo back-shading. At the top center we see bending rays of rainbow lights. Notice, too, that the sky at the horizon has been left almost completely devoid of pigment, a practice that is unknown in the Menri but typical of the Karma Gardri.



FIG. 5.23  
Virupa and a Path with the Result Refuge Tree  
Sakya monastery in Ngapa or Dzöge, Southern Amdo Province; early 20th century  
40 x 28 in. (101.6 x 71.1 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.244 (HAR 352)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, no. 189, p. 468f.

[A]					
	35	34	38	32b	33b
37	36			34b	35b





FIG. 5.24  
Buddha Śākyamuni with Sixteen Arhats  
Kham Province; ca. late 19th century  
25 x 16 in. (63.5 x 40.6 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.267 (HAR 414)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
pl. 6, p. 146

#### THE DERGE STYLE OF THANGLHA TSHEWANG

Marilyn Rhie in her glossary entry for “Derge school” asserted that a tradition by that name was an important school of painting that flourished in Derge in recent centuries.<sup>220</sup> Most Tibetan written authorities do not mention such a “Derge school” (*sde dge bris* or *sde bris*) among the usual established painting styles. Tenpa Rabten and Ngawang

Jigme in their art dictionary list Derge Gönchen (the main Derge monastery, Lhündrup Teng), but not Derge style.<sup>221</sup> As noted above, since the late nineteenth century, at least two main styles flourished in the Derge kingdom: the Khamri of Phurbu Tshering and the Gardri of Situ in nearby Palpung.

However, in the last few decades a few Tibetan publications have begun to use the term “Derge style” (*sde bris*) to designate a mixed Gardri/Menri style, as was practiced by Thanglha Tshewang (Thang lha tshe dbang, 1902–1989) of Derge. The term was used, for instance, in the Tibetan-Chinese art manual compiled by Kalsang that was published in 1992 from Xining. That manual defines *sde bris* as a painting tradition that mixes the two styles, Gardri and Menri (*sgar sman gnyis 'dres ma'i lugs*).<sup>222</sup> The artists it mentions include two famous seventeenth-century painters from outside Kham: Tendzin Norbu (bsTan 'dzin nor bu) of Lhodrak in Ü Province, Rongpa Sönam Gyalpo (Rong pa bSod nams rgyal po, possibly from Rong in eastern Tsang), and Dru Lha Phurbu Tshering (Gru Lha Phur bu tshe ring) of Chamdo. But since Thanglha Tshewang of Derge is the last person mentioned, it must refer to the style that he practiced.

Mixed Mensar styles are furthermore known to have existed in nearby Denma by about the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Shuchen mentions that the old Menri style of his sixteenth-century ancestor Sanggye Lhawang was later followed (circa the late seventeenth century) by followers in the traditions of the latter's great disciple Tamdrin Gönpö (rTa mgrin mgon po). By then his tradition had come under the influence of such great New Menri (sMan gsar ba) masters as Tsangpa Chöying Gyatsho and “Lhodrakpa” (i.e., Lhodrak Tendzin Norbu or Lhodrak Trulku Norbu Gyatsho).<sup>223</sup>

The term “Derge style” was also used in the manual of Thanglha



Tshewang's disciple Yönten Tshering, who explains the "origin of the Derge Style" (*sde bris byung tshul*) somewhat differently:<sup>224</sup>

[It is] a style that incorporates the good parts of all the previously mentioned traditions (i.e., Menri, Gardri, and Khyenri). Formerly the expert artists Chugyü Phüntshok Dargye (Chu rgyud Phun tshogs dar rgyas) and Tare Yoka (Tā re yo ka) practiced a tradition that mixed the Gardri with Menri (read: *sgar sman*). Though their painting possessed a strange or wonderful manner [or style, read: *nyams khyad mtshar can*], it did not arise as an enduring tradition. Recently the work of Karma Lotrö (Karma blo gros) alias Tharlha [i.e., Thanglha] Tshewang, a noble religious teacher, painted in a tradition called the Derge Style or Mixed Gardri and Menri, which combined in its pictures the beautiful points of all traditions. That newly born style became a sort of standard example [or authority?] for Tibetan painting.

Yönten Tshering further mentions as examples the murals and *thangkas* by Thanglha Tshewang that still exist and thus can be seen (by people visiting Kham). He also recommends the reader to examine Thanglha Tshewang's drawings that were printed on wooden blocks from Derge, which he says will surely show what is denoted by the term "Gardri/Menri" [Mixture] (*sgar sman* [*'dres ma*]) or "Derge Style" (*sde bris*).<sup>225</sup>

I am not sure who "Tare Yoka" was, but he is mentioned by the Karma Khenpo Karma Rinchen Dargye (fl. mid- to late nineteenth century), where the name is spelled Tare Moka or Tare Mokṣa.<sup>226</sup> He was thus an outstanding local painter well known in nineteenth-century Karma who worked in a hybrid style. Chugyü Phüntshok Dargye is a

little better known; he flourished in the early or mid-nineteenth century and served as painting teacher of the great scholar-connoisseur Karma Rinchen Dargye, who was himself an expert painter in a style with a large Menri component. In a history of the Gardri of Karshö he is called Dotri Phüntshok Dargye (rDo khri Phun tshogs dar rgyas). He came from Karma Monastery. Kongtrül referred to him once as "The master painter Phüntshok Dargye of Karma monastery, who was matchless in the two painting traditions of Gardri and Menri."<sup>227</sup>

We can assume that both were outstanding painters from western Kham flourishing before Karma Rinchen in the Karma/Chamdo area who worked in a wonderful synthesis, perhaps like the one we find in Figures 5.12 and 5.15.

A number of the one thousand *thangkas* painted by Thanglha Tshewang during his long and productive career have been published in an album dedicated to his artistic works. Not all may actually be by his hand (some are said to be by his students).<sup>228</sup> Even so, they do not remotely resemble the allegedly "Derge style" painting of Figure 5.23. They exemplify, instead, a recent Karma Gardri with clearer, luminous skies.<sup>229</sup>

Thanglha Tshewang seems in many paintings to employ a fairly orthodox Gardri style without many traces of the Menri. But in a few paintings we can see a darker palette and the thicker application of pigments. Let us examine two paintings of Padmasambhava, Figures 5.25 and 5.26. We begin to find in one of them the presence of the Menri (at least in the background). In the first example (Fig. 5.25, Guru Who Removes Obstacles of the Path, *Gu ru bar chad lam sel*) the basic style is a very lucid and bright Gardri, accentuated by the main figure's white lotus seat, pink inner body nimbus (with a see-through rainbow outer edge) and light pastel brown head nimbus. The sky and landscapes are mostly thinly painted, with the most elaborate clouds

and mountains found around the local protective deity directly below the main figure. Large three-lobed cumulus clouds form a natural backdrop for the outer edge of the main body nimbus. One Khamri feature of note is the colorful rainbow lights that spread out in bands at the top of the painting.

In the second example (Fig. 5.26, Teacher Padmasambhava), Thanglha Tshewang goes so far as to employ a thick, almost pure ultramarine, applying it to the body nimbuses of the main figure, four gurus in the bottom register, and two buddhas in the top—but not undiluted in the sky (as in the allegedly "Derge" examples). The sky is much darker, as is the lower green strip of landscape at the bottom. We also find the Khamri hallmark of colorful twisting rainbow lights issuing from behind the head nimbus of Padmasambhava. Two pairs of *dakinis* dance on similar bands of light on the right and left edges of the painting, as do single *dakinis* immediately below the main figure's lotus seat. Here one could speak with justification of a mixed Gardri and Menri style. Yet it still contains many obvious decorative features of the Gardri: most of the clouds have the Gardri shapes and shading, and we also find the characteristic see-through outer edge of the main figure's body nimbus.

If we can generalize from just two examples, I would say that the so called "mixed Gardri/Menri style" of Thanglha Tshewang and his immediate followers seems not to have consisted of equal parts of Gardri and Menri. Rather, it was a basically Gardri style in which Menri elements sometimes emerged.

## CENTRAL TIBETAN MENRI PAINTERS IN KHAM

Both Kham artists cited above, Namgyal Ronge and Losang Jamyang of Chatreng, enumerated Menri styles among the local styles of Kham. Losang





FIG. 5.25  
Padmasambhava as Guru who Removes  
Obstacles of the Path  
Painted by Thangla Tshewang  
Derge, Kham Province, Tibet; second half of  
20th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Thang lha tshe dbang 2006,  
p. 43.

Jamyang of Chatreng mentioned very prominently as his own home lineage a Kham tradition that closely followed the Menri styles of central Tibet. Another well-known proponent of such a style in India and Nepal in the 1980s and 1990s was Gen Sanggye Yeshe (Sangs rgyas ye shes, 1924–2009), a Geluk monk-painter from Dzachukha. He, too, is said to have followed such a “central Tibetan” Menri, which was not identical with either the Eri or Tsangri.

Sanggye Yeshe was born in the Dza watershed in the Derge district of Kham.

At the age of six he became a monk of Dza Gönsar Monastery.<sup>230</sup> That monastery, named in full as Dza Tashi Ganden Chöphel Ling, stands near Dzachu Barma town (northwest of Kandze town, near where the Dzachu River crosses the 32nd degree of latitude, according to the Amnye Machen map). It was founded by the first Hor Chöje Rabjampa Ngawang Phüntshok Jampel (Hor Chos rje Rab ’byams pa Ngag dbang phun tshogs ‘jam dpal, 1668–1746), also known as the First Dza Chöje Rinpoche.

Fig. 5.27 illustrates a fragment of a damaged mural in a local Geluk-commissioned Menri style of Kham. The photograph was taken in 1980, when the Geluk monastery of Tawu (sometimes spelled Dawu) still stood empty and was not yet restored. It was located at the Nyitsho Gönpa in Tawu County of Horkhok, in Zhechu Valley southeast of Drango. It was one of the thirteen



FIG. 5.26  
Teacher Padmasambhava  
Painted by Thanglha Tshewang  
Derge, Kham Province, Tibet; second half of  
20th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Thang lha tshe dbang 2006,  
p. 39.

Geluk monasteries founded in Horkhok in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century and thus may represent a Menri style patronized by Geluk patrons in Horkhok in about the eighteenth or nineteenth century.<sup>231</sup>

Its fringe of cumulus clouds are not the three-lobed cumulus of the Eri. Here some clouds have pairs of small “cloud eyes.” I was surprised to see that the head halo is filled with radiating golden rays, which I otherwise knew only from Amdo. Note also the thick golden edge around each petal of the lotus seat.



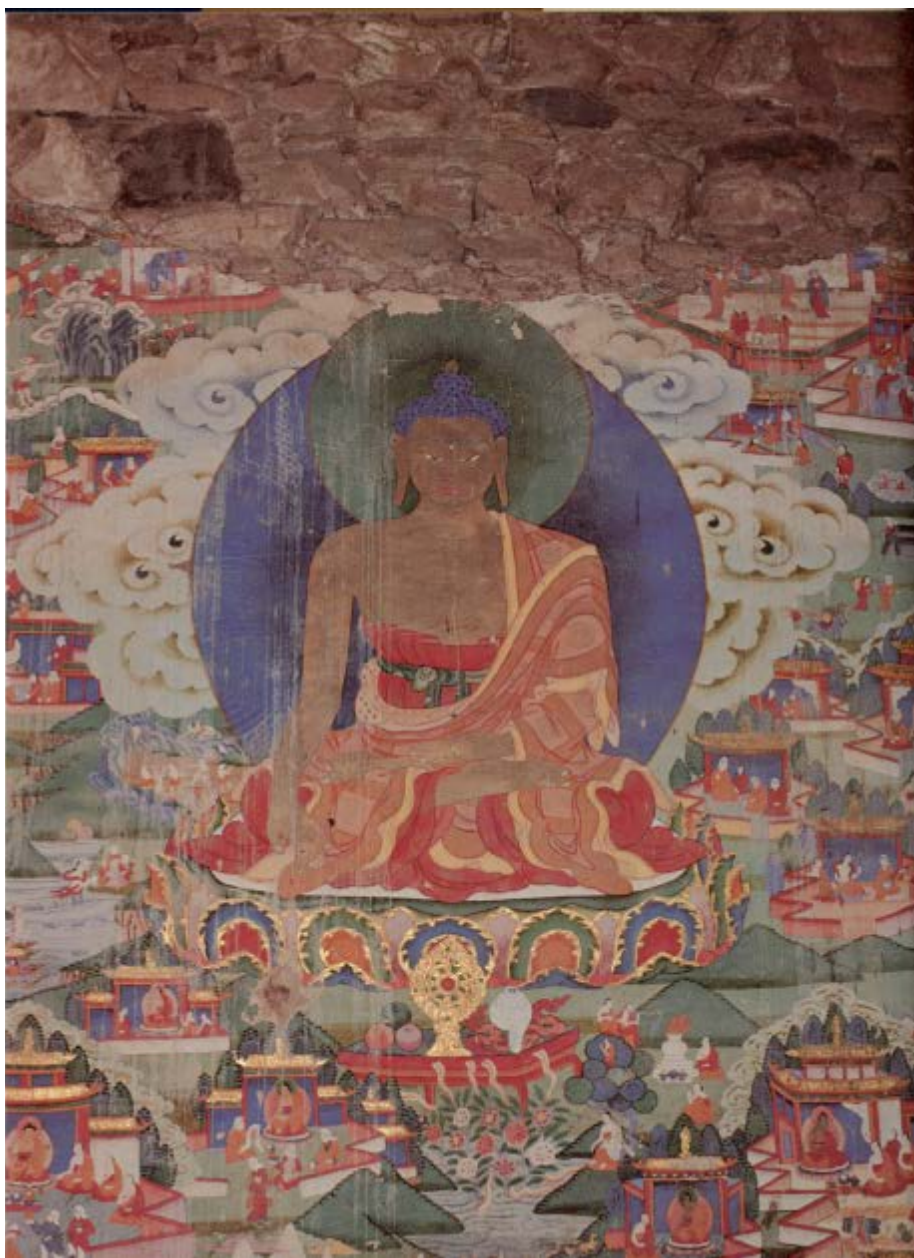


FIG. 5.27  
Mural from a Geluk Monastery in Tawu,  
Kham  
Tawu, Horkhok, Kham Province, Tibet; ca.  
18th or 19th century  
Photograph, 1980  
Literature: M. Henss 1981, fig. 100.

Yet another local Menri tradition of Kham is illustrated by Figures 5.28 and 5.29. The first (Fig. 5.28) depicts a *thangka* painter from a family of traditional artists based at Dzonyak in Gakhok (now called “Yushu,” its other traditional name was Gapa) district of the upper Yangtze gorge, north of Jyekundo in about 2000. The second (Fig. 5.29) depicts a detail of a damaged mural of the Medicine Buddha in the same style. It survives in the stupa of Dzonyak that was painted before 1959.<sup>232</sup> The style is distinctive for its employment of unusually small central circles in head nimbuses. (Compare also a mural depicting Vajradhara from nearby “Karsang Gönpa,” bsKal bzang dGon pa.)<sup>233</sup> These paintings exemplify the Menri tradition of Gakhok mentioned by Namgyal Gönpö Rongpe.<sup>234</sup>

#### TWO DOUBTFUL CHINESE-STYLE SETS

With Figures 5.30 and 5.31, we are on less certain ground. They belong to a painting set from roughly the same period as Figure 5.16. My working assumption is that it comes from Kham. Since the painting dates to the period of the Ninth Dalai Lama, i.e., to the first two decades of the nineteenth century, it postdates Situ Panchen yet predates the Kham Mensar of Phurbu Tshering. My hypothesis is that it was painted by an unusual painter who knew both a Menri



FIG. 5.28  
A painter from Dzonyak at work  
Photograph by Andreas Gruschke  
Literature: A. Gruschke 2004b, picture  
no. 106.





FIG. 5.29

The Medicine Buddha, Detail from a Mural in the Stupa of Dzonyak  
Dzonyak, Gapa, Kham Province, Tibet; 18th or 19th century  
Photograph by Andreas Gruschke  
Literature: A. Gruschke 2004b, picture no. 104.

and a local Karma Gardri style, both of which contributed to its Menri/Gardri hybrid. The light, clear sky is an obvious non-Menri element.

The set has inspired a lot of conjecture. Per Sørensen surmised about it:<sup>235</sup>

The style immediately suggests a late east Tibetan provenance, executed in a local or idiosyncratic *menri sar[ma]*, “New Menri,” idiom, evident from its elaborate and naturalistic style. The artist himself was likely either from Lhasa or Kham. The artist likely painted in the Potala, where he was an unusual and innovative court painter.

Sørensen assumed that the painting set was originally from Lhasa, was painted in Lhasa, and the painter had some close connection with Lhasa. He mentioned its “elaborate and naturalistic style” as his reason for classifying it as New Menri. In his conclusion, he summed up a bit more circumspectly:<sup>236</sup>

We do not yet fully know the precise date, explicit circumstances, artist or place of execution of this set. A reasonable guess

would be that the artist was an unusual court painter from central or eastern Tibet active in Lhasa who used existing models found in the Potala. This would suggest a master of the New Menri painting style, someone from Denma in Kham, painting around 1815.

Sørensen thus assumed that the artist used models from Potala and came from either Lhasa or Denma (the birthplace of the Ninth Dalai Lama). Yet just because the subject matter is somehow tenuously linked with Denma through the last Dalai Lama pictured does not make it probable that its painter or painters came from there. In the same catalog, Michael Henss noted that the unusual iconographic and artistic style of Figure 5.26 was “strongly influenced by the Chinese.”<sup>237</sup> Parts of it may have been copied directly from Chinese paintings.

I believe the set was more likely to have been painted as a special commission in Kham and later sent to Lhasa. The immediate patron in about 1810 could conceivably have been an official of the Tibetan government or one of the great lama-rulers of Kham, such as the Head Lamas of Chamdo or Dragyab (Brag g.yab sKyabs mgon). (The lama

palaces, or *labrang*s, of Dragyab Monastery commissioned multi-painting *thangka* sets in related styles, as Figure 5.31.). My unproven hunch is that the set somehow falls geographically more within the orbit of Chamdo, Karma, or Lhathok, i.e., northwestern Kham—a district that would in the ensuing generations become a hotbed of stylistic innovations—rather than Denma or Derge to the east. At the same time, we should not underestimate the skills of painters in many parts of Kham, and the set remains an intriguing mystery.

Figure 5.32 is from another outstanding yet stylistically untypical Chinese-style set from about 1800, perhaps also from Kham. It shows Buddha Śākyamuni as the central image in a set depicting many episodes of the Buddha’s life. The cloud clusters on both sides above include six three-lobed cumulus clouds, but without “cloud eyes.” Below them are seven or eight stratocumulus clouds, some with darker rectangular bases and some with sharply projecting points.

One authority has classified the set as in the Karma Gardri: one painting of the series was selected by Tenpa Rabten in his history of Tibetan painting and sculpture as an example of the Karma Gardri.<sup>238</sup> I once wrongly described that set as “seemingly painted by an artist from Amdo,” based on a few superficial similarities with paintings by Jamyang Losal of Gyalrong. But that cannot be confirmed.

The set was evidently a Tibetan repainting of a Chinese painting series portraying the life of the Buddha in approximately forty narrative episodes,





FIG. 5.30  
Dromtön and Two other Previous Lives of  
the Dalai Lamas  
Third from a seven-*thangka* set of the  
previous lives of the Fifth Dalai Lama  
Tibet; ca. 1810–1820  
23  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 50  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (60 x 128 cm)  
Literature: Per K. Sørensen 2005, no. V.  
Photograph by Martin Brauen



FIG. 5.31  
The Fifth Dalai Lama  
First from a seven-*thangka* set of the  
previous lives of the Fifth Dalai Lama  
Tibet; ca. 1810–1820  
23  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 50  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (60 x 128 cm)  
Literature: Per K. Sørensen 2005, no. IV.  
Photograph by Martin Brauen



if the set is complete in the seven *thangkas* that are depicted.<sup>239</sup> The two Tibetan lamas pictured above are said to be Tsongkhapa and the Eighth Dalai Lama Jampal Gyatsho. According to the catalog entry on this painting, the Eighth Dalai Lama here appears as the patron sponsoring the set (*rgyu sbyor ba*). This occurred between around 1770 and 1804.

Thus major sets painted in exquisite but unusual “Chinese” (*Rgya ris*) styles were sponsored by the Eighth and Ninth Dalai Lamas, or their followers. Later some were kept among the *thangkas* of Potala Palace.

Constraints of time prevented me from presenting paintings of Kham in more detail here. I plan to return to the subject in a future catalog.



FIG. 5.32  
Buddha Śākyamuni  
Tibet; late 18th century  
35  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 24  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (91 x 62 cm)  
After: Rig 'dzin rdo rje et al. 1985, *Bod kyi  
thang ka*, no. 32.







AMDO LIES NORTH AND EAST OF the other traditional Tibetan provinces. It can thus rightly be called northeastern Tibet. It is a vast and diverse area that was home to many communities of artists over the centuries. The styles that predominated there in the last few centuries ultimately derived from the Menri styles of central Tibet, and one prominent painting lineage is said to have been brought by artists who immigrated to Amdo from western Tsang. With the passing of time these styles became distinctively local. Though “eastern Tibetan,” they do not resemble those in Kham.

In the last century or two, Amdo had a predominant painting style, though it was never called “Amdo style” (Amdo bris), analogous to “Kham style” (Khamri) or “Tsang style” (Tsangri). That dominant style was the painting tradition of Rebkong. Though an old and well-established tradition, it was not well known to art historical authorities of Ü and Tsang. It began to be mentioned by name in central-Tibetan art-historical publications in about the 1990s (like the similarly neglected Drigung style).

I will briefly summarize what I have been able to learn so far about Amdo painting. I base my summary mainly on photographs of paintings that have been published in the last two decades.<sup>240</sup> Few Amdo paintings have been identified or discussed by Western art historians.<sup>241</sup> The photographs published by Andreas

Gruschke in his two Amdo volumes give us a rough idea of the painting styles in some monasteries.<sup>242</sup> Another—partly overlapping—source is the book of Liu Lizhong 1989, an illustrated Chinese pictorial encyclopedia of Tibet published in the late 1980s. Its plates document quite a few paintings of Amdo. Oddly enough, the paintings published in Liu’s book have yet to be discussed by Western scholars.<sup>243</sup> To be sure, the book uses only Chinese names, and some of its place and monastery names are hard to recognize.

#### THE GEOGRAPHY AND DIALECTS OF AMDO

Traditional Amdo Province, which was never an administrative province, consisted mainly of the areas around and north of the great lake Tsho Ngönpo (mTsho sngon po, “Blue Lake”), better known in English by its Mongol name Kokonor.<sup>244</sup> It extended over the grassland districts around the upper reaches of the Yellow (rMa chu, Huang Ho), Min, and Jialing Rivers.<sup>245</sup> It was the part of Greater Tibet in which Tibetan-speaking people were “most exposed over the centuries to cultural contacts with neighboring peoples: Tu, Salar, Mongolian, Hui and Chinese, and this intermingling is reflected in the demographic composition of the grassland.”<sup>246</sup>

#### *Dialects of Amdo*

Amdo is ethnically and linguistically more diverse than the other four

provinces. It (together with Gyalrong) can be divided into four main areas according to language or dialect spoken:<sup>247</sup>

1. Lowland or sedentary dialects (*rong skad*), as spoken for example in Dzongkha, the Dzongchu River Valley in northern and northeastern Amdo
2. Nomadic dialects (*'brog skad*), as spoken in Golok and Ngapa of south and southeastern Amdo
3. Mixed nomadic and sedentary dialects (*rong ma 'brog*), as in Rebkong and Labrang in central and eastern Amdo
4. Gyalrong language (the three main dialects of Gyalrong) in the far southeast<sup>248</sup>

Written Tibetan provided a common means of communication for those communities.

#### THE THREE MAIN GELUK MONASTERIES IN AMDO

The three largest centers of patronage of Buddhist art in recent centuries were the three greatest Geluk monasteries: Kumbum Champaling in the north, Rongpo Göichen (in Rebkong) in the center, and Labrang Tashikhyil in the far east. Any account of Buddhist painting in Amdo, especially in recent centuries, must take into account those three. The huge monasteries Kumbum and Labrang are famed as two of the six major seats

Detail of Fig. 6.14



of the Geluk order in the whole of Tibet; Rongchen Monastery was artistically the most distinguished. (Labrang is not considered an artistic site in its own right.)<sup>249</sup>

That two of those three great Geluk monasteries (Kumbum and Labrang) also survived the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s with relatively little damage is highly significant because, except for them, “virtually all original monasteries were destroyed during the Maoist era, and the vast bulk of Amdo’s artistic heritage has been lost.”<sup>250</sup> In addition to these and other Geluk sites, Amdo is also very significant for its art from the Jonang and Bon traditions. (Sakya and Kagyu monasteries were very few, all in the nomadic south.)<sup>251</sup>

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF AMDO PAINTING

One distinctive feature of Amdo monastic painting, especially murals, is that their architectural settings are mostly temples built with Chinese-style architecture. A second noteworthy feature is that some of their temple murals were painted on primed cloth and later affixed to the underlying walls, a procedure that was unknown among painters from other provinces. Another distinctive feature is that it was permissible to decorate the inner fields of a main figure’s head nimbus with golden brocade designs or other similar motifs (such as in Figs. 6.5 and 6.12). (Such ornately decorated head nimbuses were more common in Bon paintings of Amdo, but were possible also in Buddhist *thangkas*.)

## FIVE MAIN CENTERS OF AMDO ART

A recently published manual of Tibetan painting by two artists from northeastern Amdo very briefly summarizes the history of painting in Amdo,



FIG. 6.1  
Padmasambhava with Disciples  
Ngapa, Amdo Province, Tibet; 17th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Khu byug 1998, *Krung go’i bod ljongs*, vol. 1998 (5), pp. 26–29.

listing five main centers of art in their home province: Ngapa, Gyalrong, Kumbum, Golok, and Rebkong.<sup>252</sup> The two authors were both from Bimdo in Xunhua County of northeastern Qinghai Province and were trained in the artistic traditions of Rebkong.<sup>253</sup> They also mention the existence of the other four minor centers of art in Amdo, even before their own tradition.

### Ngapa

Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen first mention the nomadic district of Ngapa (rNga pa) in Amdo as a home to a few outstanding painters.<sup>254</sup> Ngapa or Ngayül (rNga yul) is present-day Aba Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Sichuan. Its master painters of the past included: Gö Paṇḍita Losang Sherab (Gos Paṇḍita Blo bzang Shes rab), Mogap Lhadripa (Mo



FIG. 6.2  
Cakrasamvara  
Amdo Province, Tibet; 19th or early 20th century  
24  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 16  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (62.0 x 42.5 cm)  
Hahn Cultural Foundation  
Literature: K. Tanaka 2003, no. 59.

’gab Lha bris pa), and Lhabso Önpa (Lha bzo dBon pa). From among them, a little more is known about Gö Paṇḍita, who was born near Drokge Monastery (’Brog dge dgon) in Ngapa and was the personal disciple of the famous artist-hierarch, the Tenth Karmapa (Chöying Dorje, born in Golok). When short of pigments, he is said to have collected suitable white and red stones of the Machu (rMa chu) River. With these he painted a wonderful set of the Thirty-four Jātaka Tales for the Akyong Gongma (A skyong Gong ma) chieftain family.

Figure 6.1 is a depiction of Padmasambhava with his main disciples as painted by Gö Paṇḍita. It is one of two paintings attributed to him that were published in a Tibetan journal more than a decade ago.<sup>255</sup>

Figure 6.2 is also from Amdo and probably from Ngapa. As Kimiaki Tanaka noted in a Hahn Foundation



catalog, the painting depicts the key early Jonangpa masters (Dolpopa and Tāranātha) above, and then as its final guru a lama named Palden Namnang Dorje (dPal ldan sNam snang rdo rje). A master by that name was active in Ngapa according to the history of the Jonang School by Ngawang Lodrö Trakpa (Ngag dbang blo gros grags pa).<sup>256</sup> Namnang Dorje was an eminent disciple of the lama Kunga Yönten Gyatsho (Kun dga' yon tan rgya mtsho), who founded Se Gönpa. He made a number of important improvements at that monastery and for the rituals performed regularly in its protector's chapel, later going to teach in Kham.<sup>257</sup>

The monastery of Ngayül Se (rNga yul Se dGon pa, also called Se dgon Thub bstan phyogs las nam rgyal gling) with six to eight hundred affiliated monks is the second largest Jonang establishment in Amdo. Cakrasamvara was one of the four tutelary deities specialized in by its own monastic college (*grwa tshang*) there.<sup>258</sup>

The painting has fine gold details, such as the inscriptions and the cloud brocade designs on the large orange disc where the central deity stands. The background landscape is quite simple; the only clouds are a subtle gray horizontal lattice at the top. More paintings from such monasteries of the Jonang School in Ngapa (and Golok) are to be expected.

Figure 6.16 (HAR 65401) is a Bon painting also from Ngapa. Moreover, Figure 5.23 (HAR 352), a Sakya painting discussed as possibly from Derge, probably comes from Ngapa or Dzöge.

### Gyalrong

Another significant center of art and painting in Amdo was Gyalrong (also known as Gyalmo Rong), a large border area comprising eighteen principalities. On the border of northeastern Gyalrong in the Tsakho district of Somang (So mang) principality, in particular, was



known as a source of excellent artists.<sup>259</sup> Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen prominently mention an artist from there named Jamyang Losal (b. ca. 1915). An adherent of the Geluk School, he published an art manual while in exile in India, mentioning also his father Angtang (Ang dang).<sup>260</sup>

Central Gyalrong was the source of much Bon art. For a painting with a strong historical link with Gyalrong and Bon, see Figure 6.17.

### Kumbum Monastery

Kumbum Champaling Monastery in northern Amdo was another noteworthy center of Buddhist art and artistic patronage.<sup>261</sup> Since its founding, quite a few excellent artists were based there. Around the late sixteenth century, it was home to the artist Cheshö Lhabso Losang Shenzen (Che shos Lha bzo Blo bzang bshes gnyen).<sup>262</sup> In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was also home to many skillful artists including Sherab Nyima (Shes rab nyi ma, 1910–1962) and Tashi Nyima (bKra shis nyi ma, 1933–1982).

Figure 6.3 exemplifies a painted panel from Kumbum. The composition

FIG. 6.3  
White Tārā  
Kumbum Monastery, Amdo Province, Tibet;  
18th or 19th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Liu Lizhong 1989, no. 309.

is strongly symmetrical, except the crown worn by Tārā. Its sky is medium blue on the top, fading gradually to a pale grayish shade below. The clouds have an Eri quality, but their holes are not accentuated through a deeper color, like the Eri “cloud eyes.” Within the landscape, we find several snow mountains prominently jutting up on either side of the horizon.

Figure 6.4 depicts Tsongkhapa with two his two main students and the eight greatest masters of Indian Buddhist scholasticism. It is said by Liu Lizhong to be a mural from Sakya. But a mural of Tsongkhapa is unlikely to have been found in Sakya. I wonder whether it could be from somewhere in Amdo, such as from Kumbum, the origin of the previous two murals (published by Liu as figs. 309 and 310). Its subject matter is Geluk and not Sakya. Indeed, it turns





FIG. 6.4  
Tsongkhapa with Two Main Disciples and  
Eight Great Indian Buddhist Scholastics  
Kumbum Monastery, Amdo Province, Tibet;  
ca. 19th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Liu Lizhong 1989 no. 311,  
“scripture debating, mural, Sakya.”

out to be reproduced in an earlier book on Kumbum Monastery published in Chinese.<sup>263</sup>

The composition is strongly symmetrical and the sky seems to be a uniform dark blue. The cluster of clouds in both the upper-right and -left corners is constructed of the same series of six striations alternating with a fluffy cumulus puff. They thus each represent what might be called a series of stylized “stratocumulus” (flat bottom, fluffy top) clouds. On the other hand, the minor characters are shown in partial profile with lively gestures, a typical Tsangri feature.

The round rainbow nimbuses around the two buddhas to the right and left of Tsongkhapa are also distinctive. We find a similar one in Figure 6.13, where Mañjuśrī appears above Tsongkhapa in such a nimbus. (They also occur in Bon paintings of Amdo; see Fig. 6.16.) They are not as common in central Tibet; the only case I noted

above was Figure 4.28, a painting in a western Tsang style.

#### *Golok*

Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen list Golok among the five most important locales of painting in Amdo (*mdo smad*), believing its art to possess distinctive nomadic features.<sup>264</sup> A recent book documents some one hundred *thangkas* that were commissioned by the contemporary Golok lama Do Khyentse Hungkar Dorje of an unnamed artist.<sup>265</sup> Do Khyentse Hungkar Dorje says the artist was especially invited to Lungngön (Lung sngon) Monastery. These paintings seem to be in a recent Rebkong style and not a special local style of Golok. Dzamthang Chöde and other Jonang monasteries of Golok will eventually prove, when they have been better documented, to be important sites for art history.<sup>266</sup> See also Figure 6.14 below, a Jonangpa painting possibly from Golok.

#### *Rebkong*

Among five main artistic centers of Amdo mentioned by Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen, the most famous community of painters by far was the one based in Rebkong (Re bkong, Chin. Wutun), not far from Rongpo Göncen

Monastery in central Amdo.<sup>267</sup> Figure 6.5 is an example of a painting from Rebkong, Amdo, as noted more than a decade ago by Kimiaki Tanaka in his Hahn Collection catalog of 1999.

The painting is symmetrical. Its sky is medium blue and divided into two zones by a band of distinctive lozenge-shaped horizontal clouds. Those clouds are painted, moreover, pastel red, orange, green, or blue. The lower zone of the sky extends to the horizon below, and in the green landscape below the horizon we find a strip of three gray clouds on either side, all shaped like the Eri three-lobed cumulus clouds, but without the deeply shaded “cloud-eye” indentation. (Here the painters have darkly shaded another part of each cloud.) Still lower in the landscape we find a series of mountain peaks, including a snow mountain on either side, with a series of low pink clouds behind the hills.

#### *Recent History of Rebkong Art*

In recent times the four main homes of artists in Rebkong were Senggeshong (Seng ge gshongs), Nyenthok, Gomar (sGo dmar), and Kasar (rKa sar). Nowadays the four main circles of Rebkong artists are based at upper and lower Senggeshong, Nyenthok, and Kasar.<sup>268</sup> Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen list the four most prominent artists of Rebkong in about the 1980s and 1990s, one in each place:<sup>269</sup>

1. At Senggeshong Yagotshang: Shawo Tshering (1922–2004)<sup>270</sup>
2. At Sengeshong Magotshang: Chamchen Lharipa Gyatsho (b. 1917)<sup>271</sup>
3. At Nyenthok: Nyenthok Jigme Karda 1922–1985 (who was evidently succeeded by Nyenthok Jigme Nyima)<sup>272</sup>
4. At Kasar: Lharipa Kunzang (Lharis pa Kun bzang, 1919–1996), who was Tsöndrū Rabgye’s teacher<sup>273</sup>





FIG. 6.5, detail from Fig. 2.4  
Avalokiteśvara  
Rebkong, Amdo Province, Tibet; 20th  
century  
18  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 16  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (47.7 x 42 cm)  
Hahn Cultural Foundation  
Literature: K. Tanaka 1999, p. 150f., no. 67.

#### *Histories of Rongchen Monastery and Rebkong*

Some of the art history of Amdo and Rebkong is told in the recent history of Rongchen Monastery by Jigme Thekchok.<sup>274</sup> He mentions that Lhaje Draknawa (Lha rje Brag sna ba) came to Amdo with a group of artists who came from western Tsang (gTsang stod) and that the Se (bSe)-clan families of later Rebkong artists originated with them.<sup>275</sup> Jigme Thekchok opined that Rebkong art descended from all three main Tibetan painting traditions: Menri, Khyenri and Chiuri.<sup>276</sup> Two other brief

histories of Rebkong art were written by Jigme Samdrub of Rebkong (Reb gong pa 'Jigs med bsam grub.)<sup>277</sup> A recent voluminous compilation on the arts and crafts of Tibet classifies Rebkong painting as the “New Menri of Rebkong” (*reb kong sman gsar*).<sup>278</sup>

The Rebkong local clan history *Re kong rus mdzod* (2010) has a long section giving the family lineage of the Rebkong artists of Senggeshong (pp. 698–720). (The previous owner of that history seems to have added extraneous material to the book.)<sup>279</sup>

#### *Previous Research on Rebkong Art*

In a 2001 article, Rob Linrothe clarified the place of Rebkong on the art-historical map.<sup>280</sup> He also made photographs available of numerous scroll-paintings from this tradition that were painted in the 1940s or 1950s, allowing them to be posted on the HAR (Himalayan Art Resources) website, as the eighteen *thangkas* with HAR numbers 90142 through 90159.

Linrothe rightly observed that knowledge of art of the present has art-historical value.<sup>281</sup> This is especially true of rare traditions whose past has yet to be properly documented: in those cases we may have no choice but to document and work back from the very recent past. He also lists nine general tendencies of Rebkong painting, indicating that several may also be applied to Tibetan religious painting as a whole.<sup>282</sup>

Figure 6.6 is one of the Rebkong paintings made available on the HAR website by Linrothe. It depicts Tsheringma, a Worldly Protective Goddess of a Nyingma lineage. The painting is highly symmetrical. Its sky begins with a very deep blue and fades to a slightly lighter horizon. Several cloud types are found: the upper sky features three series of stylized stratocumulus clouds, one in the center behind the central mountain peak and the others to the left and right. Those clouds are



painted grayish shades of pink, orange, purple, and blue. The clouds lower in the landscape have a more typical Eri-like three-lobed cumulus cloud shape and are colored gray. A few have tails trailing horizontally into the sky. The first few are intertwined with the series of mountain peaks beginning as the background of the central deity but then continue all the way around, framing the entire bottom part of the painting.

The body nimbus of the top-central deity is a round rainbow, as seen in Figure 6.4. (The body nimbus of the main deity is also round.)

Judging by the examples now accessible to me, several local Menri or closely allied painting styles flourished in Amdo in recent centuries. A few remain closer to central-Tibetan art, while all diverge in noticeable ways. One distinctive feature of many Menri paintings from Amdo is a strong symmetry in the overall composition. Another is outlined stratocumulus clouds with trailing lateral layers, as in Figures 6.5 and 6.6. Many painters also avidly used their own varieties of Menri three-lobed cumulus clouds.

Figure 6.7 is an illustration from a recent painting manual by a contemporary exponent of the Rebkong style. (It may have been painted by the senior co-author of the manual, Tsöndrū Rabgye.) Its main subjects are flowers and vegetation, but it also includes examples of several clouds and mountain peaks. The clouds are an interesting recent Rebkong variation on the three-lobed cumulus cloud theme. They have two shaded indentations, and the right and left lobes are symmetrical. Though clearly a continuation of a Menri cloud type, their tails make them distinctive.<sup>283</sup>

In paintings from Amdo, pointed mountains often loom prominently on the horizons of landscapes. That is to be expected in Figure 6.8, where a lama is meditating in a mountain cave. (The anchorite depicted is the



Shar Kalden Gyatsho of Rongpo, also known as Rongpo Yabje Lama [Rong po Yab rje bla ma sKal ldan rgya mtsho, 1607–1677].)

In one accessible group of mid-twentieth-century Rebkong paintings represented by Figure 6.6, many of their skies are painted in a nearly uniform (i.e., mostly ungraded) rich midnight blue.<sup>284</sup> Not all recent Amdo art possesses this characteristic to the same extent. In some paintings we find bright pastel colors. (Not even all from

FIG. 6.6  
Tsheringma, a Worldly Protective Goddess  
Rebkong, Amdo Province, Tibet; 20th  
century  
15 ½ x 22 in. (39.4 x 55.9 cm)  
Photograph courtesy of Rob Linrothe  
(HAR 90159)





FIG. 6.7  
Flowers, Clouds, and Mountains of the  
Rebkong Tradition  
Amdo Province, Tibet; 1990s  
Literature: Tsöndrö Rabgye and Dorje  
Rinchen 2001, no. 70.



FIG. 6.8  
Shar Kalden Gyatsho  
Amdo Province, Tibet  
Block print on paper  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: *Bod kyi nang bstan lha ris kyi  
sgyu rtsal*, p. 45; D. Jackson 1996, fig. 173.

Rebkong are equally bright in their tonalities; many recent Bon paintings have fairly dark skies.)

#### DIVERSE EXAMPLES

Paintings from Amdo are thus stylistically surprisingly diverse. Such diversity is demonstrated by the paintings and murals published in the book of Liu Lizhong. They include twenty-three *thangkas* preserved and photographed in Amdo during the 1980s at seven monasteries: Longwu (Rongpo Göñchen), Wutun (Rebkong Senggeshong), Labrang, Wendu (Bimdo Göñchen), Kumbum, “Zhahuang” (Tib. Chakhyung Shedrubling, Bya khyung bshad sgrub gling west of Hualong?), and “Geri” (Chin. Guide, Tib. Rongli Gönpa in Thrikha?).<sup>285</sup>

Let us briefly compare the skies, clouds, and snow mountains in four of those paintings. Figure 6.9 is said to be from Labrang Monastery. It depicts a classic subject of Geluk portraiture—Tsongkhapa in Khedrup’s vision. Stylistically, it is distinctive within this group of published paintings (and indeed within Tibetan painting as a whole) for the special bright turquoise (light greenish blue) of its sky. Note also the clusters of snow mountains at the right and left on the horizon, wreathed by clouds, many of which have horizontal blue and pink (or orange) tails. Note also the two lamas in the sky, both of whom sit within round body nimbuses of rainbows.

Figure 6.10 represents a completely different subject matter and painting style. It possesses a bright light blue sky, though not turquoise. Note also the nearly balanced landscape and the series of sharp mountain peaks that define its horizon on both sides. We also find some more typical Amdo clouds with trailing tails. Though basically of an Eri-like three-lobed cumulus cloud shape, they are not deeply shaded nor do they have accentuated cloud eyes.

The clouds are arranged symmetrically around the adept (*siddha*) at top center, here painted pastel colors—mainly pale blue and green but also in places pink and orange. Multiple bands of rainbows form a nearly round halo around the *siddha* and the clouds surrounding him.

Figure 6.11 embodies yet another style. It has a flat, dark blue sky, symmetrical clusters of clouds, some of whose tails trail away into the sky. Not all of those trailing tails are horizontal or flat. (This cloud type with slanting tails is more distinctively Chinese.) The clouds around the gurus in the sky above to the right and left have unusual dramatic shapes and are colored dark gray below and a lighter gray above (like dark nimbus or rain clouds). The mountains of the landscape are asymmetrical, with a cloud-encircled snow mountain to the left. Its clouds are mostly monochromatic grayish blue.

Fig. 6.12, too, seems to represent yet another stylistic world. This excellent painting comes from Kumbum Monastery. When I first saw the golden rain of auspicious objects, snow mountains on both sides with snow lions cavorting on the glacier peaks, and deer or antelope on the landscape, I thought this might be an example of Tsangri art, though the sky is not a deep azure blue. Note also the golden auspicious objects and jewels falling prominently through the sky, a feature found in some recent *thangkas* from Tashilhunpo (compare Figs. 4.16 and 4.17, paintings by Kachen Losang Phüntshok).<sup>286</sup>

Even the Menri three-lobed cumulus clouds, though clearly not of the Ü-based Eri type, somehow reminded me at first glance of the Tsangri. They were more colorful than the usual Eri clouds: four colors are used to shade them, mainly blue and green, but also pink and faint orange. Yet upon closer examination they turned out to be a three-lobed cloud shape used repeatedly by some artists from Amdo. Moreover,





FIG. 6.9  
Tsongkhapa in Khedrup's Vision?  
Labrang Monastery, Amdo Province, Tibet;  
18th or 19th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Liu Lizhong 1988, pl. 426.



FIG. 6.10  
Six-armed Mahākāla  
Rebkong ("Wutun"), Amdo Province, Tibet;  
19th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Liu Lizhong 1988, pl. 444.





FIG. 6.11  
Kālacakra  
Geri Monastery, Amdo Province, Tibet; 18th  
or 19th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Liu Lizhong 1988, pl. 448.



FIG. 6.12  
Cakrasamvara  
Kumbum, Amdo Province, Tibet; ca. late  
19th or early 20th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Liu Lizhong 1988, pl. 445.



FIG. 6.13

Tsongkhapa and Life Scenes  
Amdo Province, Tibet; 19th century  
47 x 26 in. (119.4 x 66 cm)

Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.1.4 (HAR 38)

Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 126 (“Eastern Tibet, perhaps Derge”).

the head nimbuses of the central tutelary (*yi dam*) deity and the three lamas above have a central green field decorated with golden repetitive designs. Such nimbus decorations are an acceptable option in Amdo painting such as those at Rebkong, but they are not, to my knowledge, normally found in the traditions of other provinces of Tibet. (See also Figs. 3.5, 4.16, 4.17, 6.5, and 6.15, which have either gold decorations in the head nimbuses or head nimbuses filled with radiating golden lines.)

Figure 6.13 is one of several paintings in the Rubin Museum of Art that can be provisionally attributed to Amdo based on style.<sup>287</sup> It depicts Tsongkhapa with several episodes from his life story (each told by a brief inscription). It is not the Eri of central Tibet or a New Menri style of Tsang or Kham. The solid deep blue skies resembles in a few respects New Menri, but it is too perfectly balanced (with the main figure on the central axis) to be that style.

Two other unexpected elements jump out: the formalized white stratocumulus clouds and mountain peaks. The clouds are almost symmetrically arrayed (despite the narrative subject matter) and they all repeat the same pattern, with thin horizontal stratus “tails” trailing out to both right and left below the cumulus puffs. In addition, a series of three pointed, snow-covered mountains looms up at the upper boundary of one narrative episode to the left of the main figure’s elbow. Those peaks, moreover, are surrounded by stylized clouds, some of which look very similar to the stylized stratocumulus clouds



above. (Two other solitary sharply pointed mountain peaks, one white, feature in other narrative episodes of Tsongkhapa’s life.)

Another feature worth noting is the round body nimbus around Mañjuśrī,

directly above Tsongkhapa. (We saw such nimbuses in Figure 6.4, a painting from Labrang.) Note also the alternating of smooth and undulating light rays in the main body nimbus.





FIG. 6.14  
Jonang Tāranātha  
Jonang Monastery, Ngapa or Golok, Amdo  
Province, Tibet; 19th century  
32 ¾ x 21 in. (83.2 x 53.3 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.393 (HAR 836)

Figure 6.14 departs stylistically from the previous *thangka* (Fig. 6.13) and may come from a different part of Amdo, such as Golok or Ngapa. The main figure has the iconography of Jonang Jetsün Tāranātha (Jo nang rje btsun Tāranātha, 1575–1634), the most influential lama of the Jonangpa since its founder, Dolpopa. The painting has an incomplete inscription on the edge of its unpainted border, written upside down:

*rgyal ba gnyis pa rje btsun ...*, (“The second Buddha, the venerable...”) The central figure wears an unusual yellow pandit hat with ear-flaps tucked up on both sides. Tāranātha wore a yellow hat, sometimes with the ear-flaps down, and sometimes with them tucked up, as here.<sup>288</sup> Like Fig. 6.13, the painting’s structure is symmetrical, with the main figure astride the central axis. Stylistically it, too, resembles at first glance one of the New Menri styles. But here the sky is divided into two horizontal sections, the top one gray blue and the bottom one solid dark blue, which is practically unknown elsewhere, but I think possible in Golok or Ngapa. Most of the cloud colors are grayish shades. The main head nimbus is an unusual and elegant grayish blue. The white clouds are the same formalized stratocumulus, with flat horizontal tails, as in Figure 6.11. Here solitary green mountains jut out on the horizon to both right and left. They are framed by a pink cloud and are not as sharply peaked as in the previous painting, nor are they covered with snow. Note the unusual fringe of flowers each with just a single bud. The blue back cushions behind the two minor human figures are completely filled with golden brocade designs, while the backrest of the central figure has its upper half filled with cloud brocade motifs.

Figure 6.15 portrays Buddha Śākyamuni and may have been painted in Amdo. It lacks the typical stylistic feature of the better known painting styles of central Tibet and Kham. Its sky is divided into two horizontal bands that join together near the base of the main figure’s head nimbus. Those bands are darker above and slightly lighter below. For me, this evokes the feeling of the nomadic lands, with an open and empty landscape and a few wild animals in the grassland, before the green rolling hills reach the edge of the distant mountains. The transparent body nimbus increases the sense of openness.





FIG. 6.15  
Buddha Śākyamuni  
Amdo Province, Tibet; 18th century  
45  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 36 in. (116.2 x 91.4 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.1.5 (HAR 39)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 2, p. 138.



The overall construction is symmetrical, with slight divergences in the landscape. The clusters of clouds in the sky around two gurus, one to the right and the other to the left, are made up of three-lobed clouds of a standard Menri type similar to the Eri. In those upper two clusters many of the uppermost clouds do feature a dark “cloud eye.” The clouds lower in the landscape are tiny. Upon examination, they turn out to be of two types from several previous Amdo paintings: stratocumulus and Menri three-lobed cumulus with trailing tails. The first type features the usual flat stratus layer below and cumulus puffs. The second type features some tails that trail off horizontally into the sky, but they lack a dark “cloud-eye” cavity so do not exactly follow the Eri.

Very prominent in the landscape is the grouping of pointed snow-covered mountains on the horizon to both right and left. The peaks gradually increase in height as they approach the outer edges of the painting. Several tiny clouds float in the air near those peaks. Some clouds are gray and harder to discern. Others are white; most have the same general stylized symmetrical stratocumulus cloud shape as in Figures 6.13 and 6.14.

Another distinctive feature is the body nimbus of the central buddha figure; a field of golden light radiates rather than solid fields of color or painted rainbows. Similar golden radiating rays fill the head nimbus of Buddha Śākyamuni. (Such radiating gold lines in head nimbuses are not normally found in paintings from central Tibet, but they can be found in Figs. 4.22 and 6.15, and in HAR 439.) One previous scholar noted a few stylistic peculiarities in Figure 6.15, taking it to be in the Khyenri style and from “eastern Tibet.”<sup>289</sup> That is an intriguing hypothesis, but could we not be more specific and say the painting might be from Amdo?

## EXAMPLES OF EASTERN-TIBETAN BON PAINTING

The patrons of the Bon religion commissioned many significant works in various painting traditions of Amdo, Gyalrong, and northern Kham, some examples of which have come to the Rubin Museum of Art.<sup>290</sup>

Bonpo communities in Amdo produced outstanding art. Some of their best artists came from Ngapa. A lama of Bon once told me that painters of his tradition in Gyalrong painted in the style of nearby Ngapa (southeastern Amdo) and that the work of the Ngapa school was also prized by central-Tibetan adherents of his tradition. Bon art had special traditions of proportions (for example the so-called “Nose-tip-based one” [*shangs rtse ma*] versus the “urna-based one” [*mdzod spu ma*]), he said, and the peaceful sacred figures seemed to have higher, broader shoulders. (I will investigate this in the future.)

This fairly large painting (Fig. 6.16) probably came from a Bon monastery in Amdo. The long-life bestowing tradition that it shows was transmitted by lamas of the Pa family. Only one of its lineal gurus was not from that family or can be linked with Amdo—a certain lama with the title Nangtön (sNang ston). His full name is Nangtön Yungdrung Tenpe Nyima (sNang ston g.Yung drung bstan pa'i nyi ma).<sup>291</sup> Since he is placed in the central position below and is somewhat larger than the others, he is important. He may have been the personal teacher of the *thangka*'s patron and probably represents the last historical generation among those lamas.

Nangtön is short for “Teacher of Nangshig” (sNang zhig gi ston pa). Nangshig was a prominent Bon clan based in Sharkhok. Lamas of that clan played a leading role at Nangshig Monastery (sNang zhig dgon pa), the largest Bon monastery in Ngapa. I therefore suspect a link with that monastery, which I hope to confirm in the future.

The landscape is subtle and the clouds are beautiful in an understated way. The upper edge of the pale green hills has scalloped edges, almost like the edge of some clouds. Meanwhile the edges of the two corner fields of gray-blue (altostratus?) clouds resemble pointed tongues of flames, though they point inward and not upward like flames.

Behind the main figure's nimbus are only two fully blossomed flowers—the rest of the decorative fringe consists of dark leaves and a few flower buds. Note also the round rainbow-edged body nimbus around the protector Machen Pomra below. He was the mountain deity of Amnye Machen and was also a protector more generally propitiated by some Bon traditions.

Figure 6.17 portrays the Bon master and treasure discoverer Sanggye Lingpa (Sangs rgyas gling pa, 1705–1735), who represents the syncretic New Bon (Bon gsar ma) movement. He sits on a hexagonal seat with a blue backrest and elaborate throne behind. His head nimbus is a subtle gray-blue color and is filled with radiating light rays.

The painting has an obvious geographic component thanks to the two prominent disciples of Sanggye Lingpa appearing before him as smaller figures. Kundrol Drakpa (Kun grol grags pa) to the left came from Kham, but he flourished in Gyalrong, receiving the support of one of the most powerful of the Gyalrong kings, gaining his support for printing the entire Bon canon. Sangngak Drakpa (gSang sngags grags pa) to his right was born in Gyalrong as a prince and remained there, practicing and teaching. Kundrol Drakpa wears monk robes and a red pointed scholar's hat, while Sangngak Drakpa is dressed as a yogi with long black hair tied in a topknot and wearing white cotton robes and a red meditation band. Both sit on hexagonal cushioned seats with blue backrest cushions draped with white scarves. (The blue cushioned backrests





FIG. 6.16  
 Drenpa Namkha  
 Amdo Province, possibly Ngapa, Tibet; 18th  
 or 19th century  
 43 x 30  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (109.2 x 78.1 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2005.4.8 (HAR 65401)  
 Literature: S. Karmay and J. Watt eds. 2007,  
 no. 48a.





FIG. 6.17  
 Sanggye Lingpa  
 Amdo Province, Tibet; 19th century  
 24 ½ x 17 ¼ in. (62.2 x 45.5 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2006.66.598 (HAR 200002)  
 Literature: S. Karmay and J. Watt eds.  
 2007, no. 51.





FIG. 6.18  
Tönpa Shenrab, Episodes from His Life  
Story  
Amdo Province, Tibet; 18th-19th century  
31  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 20  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (80.2 x 53.0 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.610 (HAR 200022)  
Literature: S. Karmay and J. Watt eds. 2007,  
no. 19.



behind them are evenly covered with brocade designs with no empty strip at the top, which is not common.)

The next painting (Fig. 6.18) is one of a stunning series depicting episodes from the life of the Bon founder, Tönpa Shenrab. A similar set (previously published by Per Kvaerne) survives in the Musée Guimet in Paris.<sup>292</sup> The Paris set is said to have been acquired in 1908 from “Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture,” i.e., from Ngapa or nearby parts of Gyalrong. Samten Karmay in his book on eighteenth-century wood carvings of Shenrab’s life stories and the xylographed Bon canon from Gyalrong says the Paris set originally consisted of twelve paintings and probably originated in Sharkhok (Sharkhog) in the eastern borderland of Amdo and northwestern Kham.<sup>293</sup>

The soft pastel shades, including pastel pink in the outer central head nimbus and surrounding clouds, make Figure 6.18, for me, one of the most exquisite works of Tibetan *thangka* painting. Another painting from that set that was published by K. Tanaka has a different combination of subtle hues, mainly soft maroons and grayish blues and greens.<sup>294</sup>

#### FROM AMDO OR ACTUALLY FROM MONGOLIA?

As representative paintings of the different artistic settlements of Amdo become better known, it should be possible to reevaluate previous doubtful attributions to Amdo. A recently published catalog of Mongolian Buddhist art edited by Carmen Meinert, for instance, identified numerous paintings as from Amdo and three as specifically from the monastery of Labrang.<sup>295</sup> A few Amdo attributions were doubtful. For instance, the prominent group of eight Medicine Buddha paintings in the catalog’s “Tibetica” section (nos. 2–9) was said to be from



“Mongolia or Amdo.” Can any connection with Amdo be confirmed?

Although the first painting in that Medicine Buddha set (no. 2) is stylistically more ambiguous, several other paintings in the set possess head and body nimbuses that are found only in Mongolian painting. In four paintings of that set (nos. 3, 5, 8, and 9) we find a distinctive series of white-tipped green jewels that line the inner blue field of the body nimbuses. (See also the body nimbus of Fig. 6.19, which shows Śākyamuni as eighth Medicine Buddha.) That special jewel lining also occurs in five unrelated paintings of the Mongolica section.<sup>296</sup> The provenance of these eight Medicine

FIG. 6.19  
Buddha Śākyamuni as Eighth of Eight  
Medicine Buddhas  
Mongolia; 18th or 19th century  
18 7/8 x 15 in. (48 x 38 cm)  
Private Collection  
After: Carmen Meinert ed. 2011, no. 9.

Buddha *thangkas* (and Fig. 6.16) thus can be ascertained as Mongolia and not Amdo. Note also the gold designs in the head nimbus and the transparent strip near the outer rainbow of the body nimbus typical of Mongolia.

(I plan to investigate the painting of Amdo, both Buddhist and Bon, in more detail in a future catalog.)







THE TRADITIONAL western-Tibetan province of Ngari was conspicuous in the last two or three centuries for the lack of its own provincial style. That is surprising since until at least the sixteenth century, Ngari was home to a series of highly distinctive local styles. The so-called “Guge style” (Gu ge bris) was one of the first local styles to have been separately described by Western art historians.<sup>297</sup> In an earlier catalog I classified the style of fifteenth-century Guge as a regional variant of the Beri style, publishing three examples.<sup>298</sup> Somewhat better documented are the much earlier (eleventh-century) murals of such sites as Tabo and Alchi in far-western and southwestern Ngari.<sup>299</sup>

#### EARLY WESTERN-TIBETAN PAINTING

Here I will present a few examples of early western-Tibetan painting as the only instance of a province that lost its distinctively local stylistic riches by the seventeenth century.

##### *A Kashmiri Style of the Twelfth Century*

Figure 7.1 is one of the earliest known *thangkas* from western Tibet. Dating to about the twelfth century, it embodies a naïve early western Indo-Tibetan style with clear links with Kashmir (Tib. *kha che*). One of its most telling decorative features is the prominent Kashmiri-

style tiered temple roof behind the main figure. It depicts Buddha Amitābha with two standing bodhisattva attendants. Above and to the left are a group of eight bodhisattva-like beings, one of whom lacks head ornaments. To the right are eight *śrāvaka* monks, mostly in dark maroon robes, but of whom one wears bright vermillion.

In many ways, Figure 7.1 is a classic early Indo-Tibetan painting, including an early rendition of the decorative mythical animals, having a garuda above with elaborate convoluted tails. Here a pink bird (*hamsa* goose or peacock?) has a tail with two whorls, leading up to a pair of *nāga* serpent deities. The tails are seized by the clawed garuda feet (whose only human part is its head).<sup>300</sup> See also the strips of stylized inset jewels around the borders and in a few places within the composition, a feature that is also typical of Eastern Indian (Sharri) style paintings in Tibet.<sup>301</sup> (The painting does *not* represent the early thirteenth-century Kashmiri painting style of Alchi.)

##### *An Early Western Beri Style of the Fourteenth Century*

Figure 7.2 is a *thangka* from western Tibet whose origin can be located more exactly than many paintings. It was discovered in 1936 inside a cave temple between Guge and Mount Kailash that was called Pangtha in Victor Chan’s Tibet pilgrimage guide of 1994.<sup>302</sup> In a previous publication I discussed that cave complex in connection with several

surviving *thangkas* found there.<sup>303</sup>

The murals within have been recently documented in more detail by Helmut and Heidi Neumann.<sup>304</sup>

The Neumanns point out some stylistic similarities with the Luri murals of Mustang.<sup>305</sup> We can date the Pangtha cave murals accordingly to the second half of the thirteenth century. Figure 7.2 dates a bit later; probably to the early fourteenth century.<sup>306</sup> It is one of the most thoroughly discussed paintings in the Tibetan art-historical literature, as I summarized in a previous catalog.<sup>307</sup> It is evidently in an early western Tibetan transitional variant of the Beri style, retaining some Indian elements.

But having located it geographically is just the first step. Only by comparing several other well-attributed pieces can we begin to say what might be specifically local about this painting.

##### *The Style of Guge in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*

Figure 7.3 is a western-Tibetan painting from a still later period. It depicts Buddha Śākyamuni with the Buddhas of Confession. It can be attributed to Guge and dated about 1475 to 1500. As Pratapaditya Pal described:<sup>308</sup>

[It] is closely related in style to the murals in the Red Temple at Tsaparang and the Serkhang temple at Tabo. At this time, the royal family of Ngari began to interact with the rising Gelug

Detail of Fig. 7.6





FIG. 7.1  
 Buddha Amitābha  
 Western Tibet or western Himalayas; 12th  
 century  
 42  $\frac{1}{8}$  x 31  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (107 x 80 cm)  
 Pritzker Collection  
 Literature: P. Pal 2003, no. 99.





FIG. 7.2  
 Vajrasattva with Consort  
 Pangtha caves, Guge, western Tibet; early  
 14th century  
 14 ½ x 12 ¾ in. (36.8 x 32.5 cm)  
 Zimmerman Family Collection  
 Literature: P. Pal 1984, p. 17; J. Huntington  
 1990, no. 116; P. Pal 1991, no. 82; D.  
 Jackson 2010, fig. 6.31; and D. Jackson  
 2011, fig. 1.6.



order in central Tibet, becoming particularly attached to Gendun Gyatso (b. 1476), one of the most influential Gelugpa hierarchs.<sup>309</sup> King Lobzang Rabten and his queen visited Gendun Gyatso in 1486, and on returning home built the Red Temple

Pal says the style was not inspired by recently founded Geluk monasteries. He found its main inspiration in “Sakya establishments, especially the Gyantse Kumbum, built around 1427. Combining vestigial elements from the earlier western Tibetan style—as seen in the solitary *thangka* . . . [Pal refers here to my Fig. 7.1]—with the refined drawing and less intense and subdued coloring of the Gyantse manner, the Guge artists developed a distinctive idiom of their own.”<sup>310</sup> That seems more likely than some theory of Kashmiri stylistic origins.

The garuda at the top of the backrest arch in Figure 7.3 is unusual because of the large golden wheel above its head. A similar golden wheel is found in Figure 7.4, a portrait of Sachen and his sons also from western Tibet, though in that painting the wheel projects prominently beyond the upper border. Note also in Figure 7.3 the three-segmented pillar of the main backrest arch where the supporting animals, even elephants, wrap themselves around the pillars on each level as in the main pillars of Figure 7.4

Figure 7.4 exemplifies a western-Tibetan style of that period. It depicts not only Sachen Kunga Nyingpo and his two most eminent sons but also the lineal gurus of the Sakya Path with the Fruit teachings.<sup>311</sup> Based on its style, it probably came from somewhere near Guge in western Tibet. Similar realistic lumbering elephants are known from Guge murals.<sup>312</sup> Note also the unusually thick pillars that hold up the complicated backrest arch to the right and left of the main figure, each

broad enough to accommodate one of Sachen’s sons. That special stylistic feature has also been documented in murals in Tholing, Guge.<sup>313</sup> The murals of the White Temple of Tholing are also known for depicting in lively and striking ways the throne-supporting animals and flowers within lotus-stalk roundels, similar to the rampant lions that gyrate here in Figure 7.4 on little lotuses just below the central throne.<sup>314</sup>

An elaborate lotus grows in the foreground from a pond below, culminating in the seat that holds the central figure. Its looping tendrils on both sides support the seats of Sachen’s sons. They sit on pedestals that rest on a lower lotus seat; these petals are highly unusual in their design and colors.<sup>315</sup> The last guru portrayed belongs to the twenty-fifth generation, four guru generations later than Ngorchén in the lineage of Ngor. This would date the painting to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century (about 1500), assuming that this is the main Ngörpa lineage, which seems reasonable.

Based on an established tradition going back to early portraits, this painting of Sachen portrays him as a venerable and kindhearted lay master.<sup>316</sup> Among his four sons, the two spiritually most outstanding ones are shown accompanying him to his right and left. Like Sachen, they were Buddhist lay adherents although they did not marry or continue the family line. They dressed as laymen, wearing long sleeves and colors like white and green, which were not allowed for monks.<sup>317</sup>

#### EASTERN NGARI

The important sites of eastern Ngari such as Kyirong (Gung thang), Mustang, and Dolpo each deserve detailed investigation.<sup>318</sup> The survival of many block prints from early Gungthang editions along with their recent investigation by Franz-Karl Ehrhard help us identify and date artists active

in Gungthang and Kyirong during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>319</sup> The significance of Mustang as a home for painters and painting traditions in important caves and temples from different periods can hardly be overlooked; the artistic monuments of that borderland principality have begun to receive more detailed documentation.<sup>320</sup>

Still easier to document historically in some respects are the old painting traditions of Dolpo, some details of which were clarified already in David Snellgrove’s *Four Lamas of Dolpo* (though we must follow the corrected chronology of the second edition).<sup>321</sup>

Careful investigation of the wall-paintings and *thangkas* from these districts in eastern Ngari is an obvious desideratum for art history. It would help us better understand the artistic developments in both central Ngari (Purang and Guge) and western and central Tsang—whose styles seem to have sometimes been accepted and continued there. It could even help the connoisseurship of Ladakhi painting, since in the past *thangka* paintings of Dolpo were occasionally wrongly identified as from Ladakh.<sup>322</sup>

#### Three Menri Paintings of Dolpo

One accessible group of paintings from Dolpo in the western Himalayas dates to the middle or end of the seventeenth century. (See Figs. 7.5–7.7.) Commissioned by Kagyu patrons, they were painted in a formal old Menri style reminiscent of what had been current in sixteenth-century Tsang. The religious masters in question had close links with the Karma Kagyu monastery of Drakkar Taso (Brag dkar rta so) in Kyirong (sKyid grong).

Figure 7.5 depicts the lama Karma Losang (Karma blo bzang) of Dolpo. He is surrounded by the lineal gurus of a tradition that includes Rechungpa (Ras





FIG. 7.3  
 Buddha Śākyamuni with Buddhas of  
 Confession  
 Guge, western Tibet; late 15th century  
 28 x 24 in. (71.1 x 61 cm)  
 Michael and Beata McCormick Collection  
 (HAR 89956)  
 Literature: P. Pal et al. 2003, no. 103.





FIG. 7.4  
 Sachen Kunga Nyingpo and His Sons  
 Western Tibet; ca. 1500  
 36 ½ x 22 in. (92.7 x 55.9 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2007.20.1 (HAR 65789)  
 Literature: D. Jackson 2010, fig. 7.30.





FIG. 7.5  
Karma Losang of Dolpo  
Dolpo, northwestern Nepal; mid- or late  
17th century  
36 x 27 ¼ in. (91.4 x 69.2 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.11.2 (HAR 171)

chung pa rDo rje grags, 1083–1161) above and Tsangnyön about halfway down. Noteworthy is the central head nimbus with an outer band of tightly packed radiating golden light rays (*'od zer*). Other decorative elements are the main figure's white scarf draped upon the deep blue mat and backrest, the fringe of peony-like flowers, and the background landscape with cloud-filled sky behind his throne. Note the gold outlining of clouds, which most Menri painters did not do.

The painting's composition is highly symmetrical, including the clouds. But it resists total symmetry by varying a great deal the application of

color to those clouds. Occasionally, for the sake of variety, a different cloud type appears in the corresponding position to another, as beneath the first two lineal gurus floating in the sky just above the mountain peaks on either side.

The sky is one large field of deepest azurite blue. The horizon begins above the top of the main figure's sitting mat, near where his backrest (*rgyab yol*) begins. Five or six different cloud types are employed, which will eventually need to be described and classified more thoroughly. Of special note are the stylized horizontal grids or lattices of clouds, evidently cirrostratus. (In nature cirrostratus clouds are often a thin, delicate formation, resembling a tangled web.) Such "cloud grids" were hallmarks of Tsang painting since the fourteenth century and were widespread in the Gyantse stupa murals. The most prominent example here is the white grid floating in the sky below the central deity of the top register.

Noteworthy within the landscape are the two series of three-pointed glacier peaks that define the horizon on both sides. The mountains are backed by clouds; just below are the typical Menri rocky cliffs, an element also very common within the meadow landscape farther below.

Figure 7.6, a sister *thangka* from Dolpo, illustrates the same eastern-Ngari Menri tradition. It is also a portrait of a local lama from Dolpo or nearby; could he be the same master as in the previous painting (Fig. 7.5), just wearing here a different Kagyu hat? Their faces, hand gestures, hand-held symbolic implements (*phyag mtshan*), and the book lying on both laps are the same.

In Figure 7.6, the main figure is surrounded once again by lineal gurus including Rechungpa (rDo rje grags, 1083–1161) above and Tsangnyön Heruka (gTsang smyon He ru ka 1452–1507) about halfway down. The decorative elements are the same as





FIG. 7.6  
 Lama of Dolpo  
 Dolpo, northwestern Nepal; mid- or late  
 17th century  
 37 x 27 in. (94 x 68.6 cm)  
 Shelly and Donald Rubin Collection  
 (HAR 156)  
 Literature: D. Jackson 1996, pl. 65; D.  
 Jackson 1999, p. 89, fig. 6; and M. Rhie and  
 R. Thurman 1999, WT, no. 112.



in Figure 7.5, including the deep-blue mat and backrest, and the central head nimbus with an outer band of tightly packed golden outward-radiating light rays. Other decorative elements include the fringe of peony-like flowers behind the main figure and the background landscape with cloud-filled sky behind the throne.

Figure 7.6, however, diverges slightly in the cloud choice. No asymmetrical usage (unlike Fig. 7.5) is seen in the clouds behind the first lamas just above the snow peaks. The horizon lies slightly lower. Otherwise, it is very similar to its sister painting (Fig. 7.5). Both have large gold brocade motifs (*gos chen ri mo*) distributed throughout the blue backrest cushion, which has by the early sixteenth century become the usual backrest for lamas in the Menri and indeed also in the Gardri. Both the seat and backrest are clearly the same sort of mat, and they both are draped with white scarves, except the front of the bottom mat. (Even the donors sit upon them in Figs. 7.5–7.7)

Such “Lamas of Dolpo” and their lives are hardly unknown in the West after David Snellgrove’s publication in the 1960s.<sup>323</sup> More recently the lives of two further lamas of Dolpo were presented by Franz-Karl Ehrhard.<sup>324</sup>

Figure 7.7 is another painting from Dolpo dating to about the second half of the seventeenth century. It depicts yet another tradition of Rechungpa (*Ras chung pa*), such as the Esoteric Transmission of Rechung (*Ras chung snyan brgyud*) as transmitted to later generations by Tsangnyön Heruka.<sup>325</sup> Tsangnyön and his disciple Götshang Repa Natshok Rangdröl (*rGod tshang Ras pa sNa tshogs rang grol*, 1494–1570) appear again. They are both iconographically distinct among the lineal gurus for the bundle of hair piled upon their heads.<sup>326</sup>



#### A STATUE OF TSANGNYÖN HERUKA

Figure 7.8 portrays the eccentric sage Tsangnyön Heruka in sculptural form. Originally from Gyantse in Tsang, he was very active in western Tibet. He is depicted as a full-fledged tantric adept, wearing elaborate bone ornaments. He wears a headdress or hat mounted with a small skull. He holds a *vajra* in his right hand, and a cuplike round object in his left. He leans slightly backward, seated on an antelope skin, with one leg slightly lifted. Through the depiction of his visage and stance, the statue evokes Tsangnyön’s unusual spiritual presence with subtlety.

FIG. 7.7

White Amitāyus According to the Queen of Accomplishment Tradition  
Dolpo, northwestern Nepal; mid- or late 17th century  
35 5/8 x 27 3/4 in. (90.5 x 70.5 cm)  
Essen collection, Museum der Kulturen, Basel  
(Inv. no. IId13642)  
Photograph by Hans Meyer-Veden  
© Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland  
Literature: G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo 1989, no. I-95 (=II-284); and D. Jackson 1996, pl. 65.







FIG. 7.8  
Tsangnyön Heruka  
Tsang Province, Tibet or western Tibet; 16th  
century  
Copper  
5 ½ x 4 ¼ x 3 in. (14 x 10.8 x 7.6 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2004.8.2 (HAR 65334)

## PAINTING STYLES OF LADAKH IN RECENT CENTURIES

Paradoxically, in the history of Tibetan painting styles the closer we come to the present, the more muddled previous Western scholarship sometimes becomes.<sup>327</sup> The few scholars who strove in recent decades to get a global perspective extending to the farthest geographical reaches of the Tibetan Buddhist cultural sphere (including western Tibet and Ladakh) labored under false assumptions about the nature and geographical extent of the modern central-Tibetan “Lhasa” style, oblivious to the existence of other provincial or local styles. That impeded a correct understanding of the recent history of Ladakhi painting and its connections with the established painting schools of central Tibet.

In the following pages I would like to describe some of the developments of painting in Ladakh in recent centuries to exemplify in more detail Ngari painting (Ladakh being the part of old Ngari I know best from personal experience). Other aspects of recent painting styles in Ladakh will also be elucidated by Rob Linrothe in chapter 9.

### *A Common Misconception*

Art historians in the West once believed that in the seventeenth or eighteenth through the twentieth century, the entire province of Ngari was an artistic backwater whose sole central-Tibetan style supposedly dominated its better-

known centers of Ladakh and Guge.<sup>328</sup> Indeed, they thought that the entire Tibetan Buddhist cultural sphere—from Ngari, including Ladakh, in the far west all the way to the Chinese borderlands in the far east—was in recent centuries dominated by a single Lhasa painting style. Deborah Klimburg-Salter, for instance, postulated a new central-Tibetan inspired style in western Tibet during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>329</sup>

A new style emerged, combining elements of the earlier regional styles (Smith 1970). This style . . . characterized by a new figure style, Chinese landscape elements, and a palette including intense pinks and light greens, became associated with the Lhasa or Central Tibetan style, which remains popular in contemporary Tibetan art.

Another author similarly held that by the end of the eighteenth century, most regionalism was lost in Tibetan painting, and that under the ascendancy of the Geluk Order after the Fifth Dalai Lama, an ever greater national style came into existence, that supposedly maintained its vigor into the twentieth century.<sup>330</sup> Similar one-style-fits-all characterizations of recent western-Tibetan styles (especially in Ladakh and Guge) were made by John Huntington in his pioneering chart of Tibetan styles, which G. Béguin translated unchanged in his Guimet *thangka* catalog.<sup>331</sup>

In reality, the widely separated and culturally distinct valleys and highlands of western Tibet were home to a variety of artistic traditions. At the same time, central Tibet (Ü and Tsang Provinces) was actually home to five or more painting traditions in recent generations, including the Tsangri, Eri, Karma Gardri, Khyenri, and Drigung styles. To analyze meaningfully Ladakhi painting in relation to central-Tibetan styles we first need to distinguish between the

major and minor painting schools of central Tibet (as I did above in chapters 3 and 4). As mentioned above, the Eri or Üri style did dominate its home province of Ü from the nineteenth century onward, including government and Geluk institutions. (Closely related Menri styles also flourished in many Geluk monasteries built or refurbished in Kham Province to the east in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; see Fig. 5.27.)

But the traditional province to the far west—Ngari (including Ladakh, politically now part of India)—was artistically dominated by the other central-Tibetan province, Tsang. Tsang enjoyed close religious ties to Ngari, especially through Tashilhunpo, the mother monastery for most Geluk monks of Ladakh.<sup>332</sup>

### *A Second Misconception*

A second main historical misconception about Ngari and Ladakhi painting of recent centuries concerned the origin of the universally dominant “Lhasa style,” that it directly descended from the *New* Menri style of the great seventeenth-century painter of Tsang, Chöying Gyatsho. As explained in chapter 3, this misrepresents the origins and identity of the Eri, which was an Ü Province-based continuation of the *Old* Menri.

Figure 7.9 exemplifies an Eri or Üri style of the early twentieth century, also shown in chapter 3 by such paintings as Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. Here can be seen at once the typical light blue sky, the evenly spaced crown element, the use of only blue and greens for clouds, and the perfect Eri three-lobed cloud with dark “cloud eye” beneath the lotus seat of Mañjuśrī, above right.

Eri paintings of peaceful principal deities rarely depict snow mountains in their background landscapes. But since the iconography of a protective deity calls for it, this one does. This painting is unusually rich, in fact, in





FIG. 7.9  
The Protector Lamo Tshangpa  
Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet; early 20th  
century  
37 x 24  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (94 x 63 cm)  
Literature: Rig 'dzin rdo rje et al. 1985,  
*Bod kyi thang ka*, no. 124; and D. Jackson  
2005a, fig. 12.

clouds and landscape details, mostly in harmony with the dramatic setting of a protective deity. (The placement of two Chinese trees to the right of the main figure is a little jarring, injecting a more peaceful tone; compare Fig. 3.6.) The clouds behind most deities are standard optional types, typically used for instance when painting the four protectors of the directions or Four Great Kings (*rgyal chen bzhi*) in the

Eri style, and indeed in the Menri in general. We saw such clouds in Figure 5.13, where Dhṛtarāṣṭra, guardian of the east, was drawn by the prominent Eri painter Tenpa Rabten of Lhasa.<sup>333</sup>

#### PAINTING STYLES ENUMERATED BY A PAINTER FROM LADAKH

The misconception of the “ubiquitous later Lhasa style” was not shared by well-informed painters in Ladakh. Indeed, the career and sayings of the Ladakhi artist Yeshe Jamyang (b. 1932) clearly disprove it.<sup>334</sup> Born into a poor Geluk family in Nyurla, Ladakh, Yeshe Jamyang was recruited as a Drigung Kagyu monk as a boy and went in the 1940s to the mother cloister of Drigung in northern Ü to study.<sup>335</sup> There he stayed long enough to learn the painting style peculiar to that monastery.<sup>336</sup> Later in life after returning to Ladakh, he painted many murals and *thangkas* in Ladakh and southern India.

Yeshe Jamyang stressed the variety of Tibetan paintings styles, repeating the traditional saying (as quoted in chapter 2):<sup>337</sup>

Chinese style was like a rainbow in  
the sky;  
the painting school from Kham  
was like the dusk of evening;  
the style of E district is like the  
dawn,<sup>338</sup> and  
the painting school from Drigung  
is like after sunrise.

He also counted as a style of Ü Province the “Tshurphu style” (mTshur ris, i.e., the Karma Gardri) of Tshurphu Monastery in northwest Ü. Thus for him, Ü Province of central Tibet alone was home to three distinct painting traditions: the official style (which he called the Eri), and the two non-official or minor styles cultivated at the monastic seats of the Drigung and Karma Kagyu.





FIG. 7.10

Nyurla Ngawang Tshering, Yeshe Jamyang, and a Drigung Kagyü Painting in Progress  
Photograph courtesy of Nyurla Ngawang Tshering, Leh, Ladakh, 1995

Literature: D. Jackson 2005a, fig. 6.

#### THE TSANGRI PAINTING STYLE IN LADAKH

The typical “Lhasa style” of Ü Province (the Üri, alias Eri) never spread widely in Ladakh, though it may have been sporadically present. If any of the styles of central Tibet (including both Ü and Tsang Provinces) was most widespread there in the last two or three centuries, it was the dominant style of Tsang, which we saw in chapter 4. Its most eminent school was based at Tashilhunpo Monastery, the great seat of the Panchen Rinpoche just outside Shigatse.

For an example of Tsang Province painting of perhaps the eighteenth century, see Figure 7.11, though my proposed chronology still needs confirmation. Its sky and palette in general mark it as within the Tsangri. Yet it displays baroque exuberance in its elaborate treatment of clouds, decorative backrests, and landscape. The meadows and hills below team with life—trees encroach, for instance, upon the pink body nimbuses of the standing venerable monks. Likewise flames from small protective deities impinge upon the neighboring lotus seats. In each lotus pool a swan splashes or dips its heads while other types of green birds strut on dry land. Such swarming compositions express an exuberance also found in

*thangkas* of an alternative style in Tsang with crowded compositions, which may date to around the same general period (Cf. Figs. 4.25–4.27). The dating of this *thangka* preserved in Likyil Monastery, Ladakh, should be confirmed by reading the gold caption beneath the lamas (which are illegible in the accessible photograph).

The dominance of the Tsang style in Ladakh was attested to by additional remarks of Yeshe Jamyang. When speaking of his own contacts with painters of different schools in Ladakh, he prominently mentioned painters following the Tsangri, a style he highly appreciated. In a survey three decades ago, Lo Bue also documented the recent predominance of Tsang style traditions in Ladakh.<sup>339</sup> My interviews of Ladakhi painters in the late 1970s and early 1980s led me to the same conclusion.

Most Geluk monks from Ladakh who received a high degree of scholastic training did so at Tashilhunpo near Shigatse in Tsang, their mother monastery or monastic seat (*gdan sa*). Geluk monks from Ngari normally went there for full ordination and higher education. (A few went to Drepung in Ü.) Tashilhunpo was artistically the main center of the Tsangri established by the disciples and successors of

Tsangpa Chöying Gyatsho.<sup>340</sup> The lamas or monks of Ladakh sometimes brought back *thangkas* when returning home, and their home monasteries occasionally also invited painters from Tashilhunpo to work in Ladakh.

One Tsangri painter invited from Tsang to western Ngari was Dewa Pasang (bDe ba Pa sang, b. 1922), a monk from Tashilhunpo Monastery whose style has been perpetuated in Ladakh through the outstanding local disciples he trained. He was invited to Ladakh from Tsang by the eminent lama Kushok Bakula (1917–2003) of Spituk Monastery to paint *thangkas* at Spituk.<sup>341</sup> The most gifted and outstanding of Dewa Pasang’s Ladakhi students was Tshering Wangdu Olthangpa (Tshe ring dbang ’dus ‘Ol thang pa, b. 1944) a lay painter born at Nyemo (the home of Yeshe Jamyang). Lo Bue recounts his painting career in some detail, mentioning two cases of major collaboration with Yeshe Jamyang.<sup>342</sup> Tshering Wangdu was my oral informant, “Wangdu of Ladakh,” for *Thangka Painting: Methods and Materials*.<sup>343</sup>

Lo Bue also mentioned the Geluk monk Tashi Wangchuk (bKra shis dbang phyug, b. 1948) from the village of Nang as one of the most promising pupils of Tshering Wangdu.<sup>344</sup> Several typical examples of the Tsang style have also been published from Ladakhi collections, presumably dating to the eighteenth or nineteenth century.<sup>345</sup> (They include Fig. 7.11.)





FIG. 7.11  
Buddha Śākyamuni as Central Figure in a  
Set of the Sixteen Arhats  
Preserved in Likyil Monastery, Ladakh;  
18th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Ngawang Samten 1986, p. 21,  
*thangka* no. 3; and D. Jackson 2005a, fig. 7.

## THE DRIGUNG PAINTING STYLE IN LADAKH

A second central-Tibetan style that was typically practiced in Ladakh in recent centuries was the Drigung style (*'bri bris*), present at such Drigung Kagyu branch monasteries as Phyang (Phyiwang) and Lamayuru.<sup>346</sup> The existence of this minor painting tradition was established through the presence of resident Ladakhi artists at Phyang Monastery as early as the 1930s.<sup>347</sup> In recent decades its existence is attested to by the career of the monk-painter Yeshe Jamyang of Lamayuru. I introduced the Drigung painting tradition in a preliminary sketch and in a longer article.<sup>348</sup> (I also briefly introduced this style in chapter 3 in connection with Figure 3.27. I plan to investigate Drigung painting further in a future catalog of this series.)

Rase Könchok Gyatsho (Ra se dKon mchog rgya mtsho, b. 1968), an outstanding historian of the Drigung Kagyu residing in central Tibet has published an important sketch of the history of the religious art of his school in Tibetan.<sup>349</sup> He also wrote a voluminous *Religious History of Drigung* culling many passages relevant to both statues and paintings;<sup>350</sup> he had access to *thangkas* and informants at Drigung. He showed that what we might call the Drigung painting style (*'bri bris*) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is just one of many in a long sequence of painting styles patronized at Drigung. He detected a stylistic synthesis in the work of some still later artists: after mentioning the presence of Khyenri painters previously at the time of the twenty-fifth abbot, he asserted that during the period of the fourteenth calendric cycle (1807–1866) the “new and old Gar traditions” (sGar lugs, i.e., old and new Karma Gardri) of painting could be discerned in *thangkas*.<sup>351</sup>





### *Paintings by Yeshe Jamyang*

As recent examples of the painting style practiced by Yeshe Jamyang, see Figures 7.10, 7.12 and 7.13. Yeshe Jamyang maintained that the Drigung painting style was, in general, an independent tradition unconnected with the Eri of Ü, Karma Gardri of Tshurphu (*mtshur ris*), or Tsangri.<sup>352</sup> In recent years he began to paint his skies darker, presumably a result of his long and close association with Tsangri-style painters in Ladakh. Note the dark sky at the top and Tsangri-style clouds in both Figures 7.12 and 7.13. Thus his recent paintings do not in that respect represent the Drigung painting style as it was practiced by the prior one or two generations.

The three-spiral, three-lobed cumulus clouds of Figure 7.12 (right side) can be found in all Menri traditions, not just the Tsangri (cf. Figs. 5.14 and 7.9). The three-lobed cumulus clouds with single spiral swirls to right and left around the peaceful figures in Figure 7.13 is known from the New Menri of Kham (cf. Fig. 5.20) and also found in the clouds of Ridzong Setrül (Figs. 7.18 and 7.19). Here we also need to compare the clouds around the Four Great Kings in paintings from Drigung sources. Among the Drigung paintings,

we begin to find similar (more Menri-like) clouds in Figure 7.17.

### *Paintings in Recent Drigung Painting Styles*

Figures 7.14 through 7.17 exemplify the Drigung style of paintings in the past two or three centuries, as does Figure 3.27. The first, Figure 7.14, is now preserved in Ladakh and is the most recent of the four. When we compare its sky and clouds with those in Figures 7.12 and 7.13, we see that the sky is lighter and the clouds are in a distinctively Drigung manner.

In many Drigung paintings a series of nine or ten clouds of similar shape appear in a row as a fringe behind the flame nimbus or background flames of the principal figure, especially wrathful or tutelary deities (as in Figs 7.14–7.16). They are simplified or stylized three-lobed cumulus clouds, sometimes including a not very prominent cloud eye. The originally three-lobed shape has lost its three lobes and become almost oval, with a regularly scalloped upper edge of five to seven bumps. Here I will describe only the most prominent clouds that appear near the main figure.

In Figure 7.14 each fringe cloud

FIG. 7.12

The Drigung Painter Yeshe Jamyang with a Painting in Progress

Photograph courtesy of Nyurla Ngawang Tsering, Leh, Ladakh, 1995

Literature: D. Jackson 2005a, fig. 5.

has no cloud eye and its center in some places forms a darkly outlined spiral, as in some Menri clouds. The regular flat and oval shape is distinctive, even in this relatively late and simple version.

Figures 7.15 and 7.16 are two somewhat earlier Drigung paintings. The first can be dated from its lineage to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, while the second dates to the late eighteenth century. Both contain variants of Drigung-style clouds. In Figure 7.15 the principal figure is framed by a series of nine cumulus clouds of roughly the same size and shape, except that the bottom ones have tails that trail outward. They alternate base colors, gray and white.

In Figure 7.16 the first two clouds on either side have a classic Menri cloud shape with cloud eye and tail leading into the flames. Here the outer back-shading of the upper edge sometimes results in a deep blue drop of indigo accumulating in the gaps between those small outer bumps. This creates a series of regular dark notches in the clouds.

As a final painting connected with the Drigung Kagyu tradition and its painting style, see Figure 7.17, a *thangka* I photographed in Leh in 1979. It portrays a great master with the typically Nyingma title Rigdzin (*rig 'dzin*). I first supposed him to be Kathok Rigdzin Tshewang Norbu (Kah thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu, 1698–1755), a master from the Nyingma monastery of Kathok in central Kham who visited Ladakh in the eighteenth century.<sup>353</sup> Yet I could not verify any link with him.

When I first saw the painting (Fig. 7.17), I did not know the Drigung style





FIG. 7.13  
Mañjuśrī-Yamānaka  
Ladakh; 20th century  
Painted by Yeshe Jamyang  
Dimensions unknown  
Photograph courtesy of Nyurla Ngawang  
Tsering  
Literature: D. Jackson 2005a, fig. 11.

and took it to exemplify a Karma Gardri painting style of Tshurphu or Kham. Closer examination of the clouds and mountains in the landscape, however, leads me to classify it in the Drigung style.<sup>354</sup> The central lama sits on a classic throne with deep-blue backrest lined with white scarves that could have appeared in a portrait of any school. Above him a series of ten ovoid clouds appear, not behind a mass of flames as before but behind three pointed green hills or blue-green crags. The clouds vary a little in shape and arrangement,

but they retain a similar scalloped top edge as before.

Presumably this portrait depicts not Kathok Situ, but one of the great Rigdzin of Drigung, such as Rigdzin Chökyi Trakpa (Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa, 1595–1659). I believe it was painted in Ladakh by a painter of the Drigung tradition and style.

#### POSSIBLE ÜRI PAINTERS IN LADAKH

Erberto Lo Bue in his preliminary study of almost thirty years ago did not document a single clear case of a painter who painted in the Üri style in Ladakh.<sup>355</sup> Though the leading Ladakhi artists interviewed by Lo Bue in the 1970s worked in the Tsangri, one would assume that some Ladakhi artists occasionally went to Ü Province and learned there the style of Lhasa.



FIG. 7.14  
Sahaja Samvara  
Tibet; 19th or early 20th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Photograph courtesy of Nyurla Ngawang  
Tsering  
Literature: D. Jackson 1996, fig. 189; and  
D. Jackson 2005a, fig. 10.

One possible instance of Üri style penetrating Ladakh appears in the murals of Ridzong (Ri rdzong) Monastery, which seemed at first glance to be closer to the Eri style than the Tsangri. Figure 7.18, for instance, is a mural whose sky is much lighter than usual for the Tsangri. The clouds include one (next to the tree at the top left) that has the typical shape and shaded cavity of the Eri three-lobed cumulus. But the shapes, color, and shading of the other clouds are more typical of the New Menri traditions of either Kham or Tsang.





FIG. 7.15  
Sahaja Samvara with Lineage of Drigung  
Gurus  
Tibet; late 18th or early 19th century  
22  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 15  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (58 x 40 cm)  
Private Collection, Cologne  
After: D. Jackson 1996, pl. 64; and D.  
Jackson 2003, fig. 3.



FIG. 7.16  
Mañjuśrī-Yamānaka with Drigung Guru  
Lineage  
Tibet; late 18th century  
21  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 16  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (54 x 43 cm)  
Essen Collection, Museum der Kulturen, Basel  
© Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland  
Literature: Gert-Wolfgang Essen and T. T.  
Thinggo 1989, nos. I-109 and II-330;  
D. Jackson 2005a, fig. 9; D. Jackson 2012,  
fig. 7.16



FIG. 7.17  
A Lama Bearing the Title Rigdzin  
Leh, Ladakh; ca. 18th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Photograph by D. Jackson, Leh, 1979  
Literature: D. Jackson 2005, fig. 14  
(wrongly published as fig. 13).



FIG. 7.18

Cosmogony of the Abhidharma  
Murals, painted by Ridzong Setrül  
Ridzong Monastery, Ladakh; ca. early 20th  
century  
Photograph by Chiara Bellini, courtesy of E.  
Lo Bue

These murals (Fig. 7.18) are attributed to the lama Ridzong Setrül Losang Tshultrim Chöphel (Ri rdzong Sras sprul Blo bzang tshul khrims chos 'phel, 1864–1927), one of the most versatile artists to appear in Ladakh during the last two centuries.<sup>356</sup> Born in the Togoche (To go che) family of Yangthang (Yang thang), as a boy he became a monk then grew up to be a lama of the Geluk monastery of Ridzong. He went to central Tibet for ordination and journeyed to Tshawa Pashö (Tsha ba dPa' shod) in southwestern Kham, where he learned poetics and grammar. Later he taught actively in lower Ladakh. A number of his writings (some three hundred fifty pages long) were printed from blocks at Ridzong.<sup>357</sup>

Ridzong Setrül possessed many talents. Famed as an all-around scholar or “pandita,” he was also gifted as a musician and poet.<sup>358</sup> He produced many works of religious art, though the accessible sources do not say where he learned painting—in Kham or in Ü. My guess is that he learned a Menri style in Pashö in western Kham.<sup>359</sup> Figure 7.19 depicts another mural attributed to him, one of a series of murals depicting the Great Deeds of the Buddha (evidently based on the Derge block prints). Its sky (like that in Fig. 7.18) is again much lighter than in the usual Tsangri, and the cloud shapes and shading are close to those of the New Menri of Kham.

Other noteworthy fruits of Ridzong Setrül's artistry are the realistic drawings of people in everyday scenes



and animals from his sketchbook. Reproduced by Madanjeet Singh in 1968 in the book *Himalayan Art*,<sup>360</sup> they were said to be from the sketchbook of “the Head Lama Lobzang Tsulthim . . . of Risong monastery, Ladakh.”<sup>361</sup> (See Figs. 7.20 and 7.21.)

Lo Bue in his brief survey mentioned other Ladakhi painters who visited Ü. One of them, Ngawang Chöphel (Ngag dbang chos 'phel, b. 1938) of Lingshed, was a relative of Tshering Wangdu. The Geluk monk-painter spent some ten years at Drepung ('Bras spungs) Monastery outside Lhasa.<sup>362</sup> At home in Ladakh he painted together with other Ladakhi painters such as Tshering Wangdu (Tsang style) and Yeshe Jamyang (Drigung style). His stylistic affiliation is unclear, though one would have expected him to have learned the Eri style if he studied painting in Ü.<sup>363</sup>

Tshering Ngödrup (Tshe ring dngos grub, b. 1946), a Ladakhi painter of the 1980s and 1990s is an uncertain case. Lo Bue presented one of his *thangkas*, the sky of which seems lighter than the typical Tsang-style skies, though he did not consistently use the typical Eri-style

clouds in one published painting.<sup>364</sup> Yet according to the later survey of Lo Bue, he learned the Tsangri under Tshering Wangdu for two years in the 1960s and became one of his most skilled pupils. Thus his basic affiliation by training was with the Tsangri.<sup>365</sup>

#### A MINOR PAINTING TRADITION OF THE DRUKPA KAGYU IN LADAKH?

What about the Drukpa Kagyu monasteries in Ladakh, such as Hemis and Stagna? To what extent did they patronize special outside traditions of their own (such as the Drukpa Kagyu styles of Bhutan or Kham)?<sup>366</sup> E. Gene Smith asserted that the influence of Bhutanese art stretched to Drukpa Kagyu monastic establishments in Ladakh, Lahoul, and Spiti in the western Tibetan borderlands.<sup>367</sup> This assertion was accepted by Carolyn Copeland in her catalog of *thangkas* from the Koelz collection in Ann Arbor 1980, who considered Bhutan the origin of the latest major stylistic influx in Ladakh.

In a collection of Ladakhi and western-Himalayan *thangkas* gathered by Walter Koelz in 1932 to 1933, only





FIG. 7.19  
Buddha Śākyamuni Meditating  
Murals, painted by Ridzong Setrül  
Ridzong Monastery, Ladakh; ca. early 20th  
century  
Photograph by Nancy Rollier, courtesy of E.  
Lo Bue

Figure 7.22, has a clearly Bhutanese Drukpa subject matter, that of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal with his lineage.<sup>368</sup> It came from Nago Monastery in Khunu (Kinnuar/Kunawar) in Himachal, not Ladakh. Carolyn Copeland considered it a “Bhutanese painting” and classified it as being in the “Drukri” style, though the term is not apt for that painting.

The style or styles of Bhutan, though important in their own right in their homeland, were in Ladakh minor traditions that never spread widely. (For four examples of paintings from Bhutan, see chapter 8, Figs. 8.1–8.4.) Moreover, the most prominent painter of contemporary Ladakh—the Tsangri master Tshering Wangdu—came from a Drukpa Kagyu family. He executed numerous commissions in Drukpa monasteries of Ladakh.<sup>369</sup>

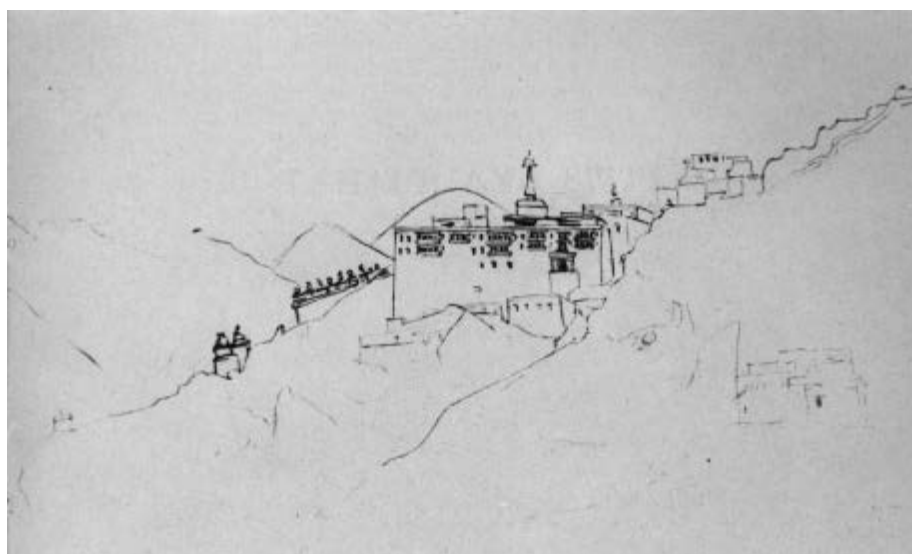


FIG. 7.20  
Drawing of Ridzong Monastery from the  
Notebook of Ridzong Setrül  
Ladakh; late 19th or early 20th century  
Ink on paper  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: M. Singh 1968, p. 97.



FIG. 7.21  
Two Itinerant Storytellers from the  
Notebook of Ridzong Setrül  
Ladakh; late 19th or early 20th century  
Ink on paper  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: M. Singh 1968, p. 63.





FIG. 7.22  
Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal with Lineage  
Nago Monastery, Kunawar, northern India,  
or Bhutan; mid- or late 17th century?  
19 ¼ x 27 ½ in. (48.9 x 69.8 cm)  
University of Michigan Museum of  
Anthropology (UMMA 17485, Koelz  
Collection, K523)  
(HAR 92035)  
Literature: C. Copeland 1980, p. 20, fig.  
24; and p. 57, fig. 56, “Drug ri, Bhutanese  
painting.”

## KARMA GARDRI PAINTINGS IN LADAKH

The Karma Gardri style of the Karma Kagyu School was relatively rare in Ngari in general, and in Ladakh in particular. An exhibition catalog of *thangkas* from Ladakh published only three *thangkas* somewhat close to the Gardri.<sup>370</sup> Figure 7.23 is one of them: this painting of the Sixteen Arhats is preserved in the Drigung Kagyu monastery of Phyang. (The remaining *thangkas* in the catalog were either in the Tsangri or Drigung style.)

The Sixteen Arhats are not ideal examples to compare for “Chinese influence” since they are a Chinese-derived genre. We can also not exclude the possibility that Figure 7.23 is a lesser-known type of Drigung art. (It could have been brought to Ladakh from central Tibet.)

As examples of recent Gardri art from eastern Ngari, see Figures 1.13 and 1.14. A number of clearer examples of Karma Gardri paintings in Ladakh will be presented by Rob Linrothe in chapter 9.

## CONCLUSIONS

The misconception that Ladakh and all of western Tibet were dominated by a supposedly “universal Lhasa style” reflects not only a lack of familiarity with the specific painting traditions of Ngari but also a failure to differentiate between the several painting styles of Ü and Tsang in central Tibet. That misunderstanding can be rectified in part by acknowledging the existence of at least four distinct central-Tibetan styles, from among which the most significant for Ladakh in recent generations have been the Tsangri style of Tashilhunpo and the style of Drigung, *not* the Eri of Lhasa.

Thus Lo Bue’s observation three decades ago remains, in general, correct: “In the last century and a half, Ladakhi painters looked towards the great and



well-established traditions of Tibetan painting, as represented in the large monastic universities of central Tibet.”<sup>371</sup> But to understand more exactly the stylistic situation, we must specify which of the two central Tibetan provinces was most involved: Ü or Tsang. Certainly we should continue to survey the main surviving *thangkas* and murals in Ladakh, identifying the painters involved and their precise stylistic affiliations. Ladakh has been a source of knowledge about Tibetan art for more than a century and a half.<sup>372</sup> If we open our eyes to it, Ladakhi painting can still be an important key to understanding Tibetan painting as a whole.



FIG. 7.23  
Arhat  
Preserved at Phyang Monastery, Ladakh; ca.  
16th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Literature: Ngawang Samten 1986, p.  
29, no. 11; and D. Jackson 2005, fig. 13  
(wrongly labeled as fig. 14).







## Painting Styles in Outlying Tibetan Buddhist Countries

AMONG THE DISTANT LANDS within the vast Tibetan Buddhist realm that lies outside the five Tibetan provinces proper, three were most significant for their art. These were Bhutan, Mongolia, and northern China (especially Qing-dynasty court art in Beijing and Inner Mongolia). In this chapter I present a few examples that can confidently be ascribed to each country of origin. I favored paintings that were more accessible, such as those in the Rubin Museum of Art. Though I could not investigate each painting in detail, I give a foretaste of artistic treasures yet to be explored.

### PAINTINGS FROM BHUTAN

The kingdom of Bhutan is an important center of living Tibetan Buddhist culture. It (with Mongolia) constitutes one of two independent Tibetan Buddhist countries now in existence. Its culture is the subject of several books and articles.<sup>373</sup>

In recent decades the art of Bhutan was mentioned in connection with Tibetan art. E. Gene Smith devoted several paragraphs to its artistic traditions.<sup>374</sup> He also briefly alluded to the existence of local painting styles in Dakpo (Dwags po)—in southeastern Ü Province of Tibet—one of the southern-Tibetan districts close to Bhutan. He called that style the Dakri (*dwags ris*), identifying one of its greatest painters as Shünthingpa (Zhun mthing pa).<sup>375</sup>

The most extensive presentation of Bhutanese *thangkas* is given in the recent exhibition catalog *The Dragon's Gift* edited by Terese Tse Bartholomew and John Johnston.<sup>376</sup> Most of its more than one hundred works of art have clear provenances. They were borrowed from the active monasteries where the icons continue to be worshiped, and their immediate origins are specified. (In some cases that means just the present monastic home, but not the original provenance, which was central Tibet or Kham.)

The local name for Bhutan is Druk'yül ('Brug yul, "Dragon Land"); its official religious tradition is the Drukpa Kagyu. But the art of Bhutan (with its predominantly Drukpa Kagyu but also widespread Nyingma traditions), should not be confused with the artistic traditions of the Drukpa Kagyu School as a whole. The various branches of the Drukpa Kagyu (one traditionally speaks of "Upper," "Middle," and "Lower Drukpas") were widespread in Tibet, with monasteries extending from Ladakh (e.g., Hemis) to Kham (e.g., Khampagar in Lhathok). The Bhutan-based and Ralung-based factions of this school have been at odds since the schism when Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rNam rgyal, 1594–1651) was not enthroned at Ralung as the incarnation of Drukchen Pema Karpo ('Brug chen Padma dkar po, 1527–1592) in the early seventeenth century.

The early works of art of the Drukpa Kagyu lineages surviving outside Bhutan were at first hard for

Western art historians to recognize, though examples made their way into various collections and published catalogs. These traditions can often be identified quite easily thanks to the distinct iconography of their lamas, especially the distinctive white-robe clad yogi (*ras pa*) named Ling Repa Pema Dorje (Gling Ras pa Padma rdo rje, 1128–1188) and his student Tsangpa Gyare (gTsang pa rGya ras).<sup>377</sup>

In Figure 8.4a, Ling Repa appears as a white-haired, dark-skinned and nearly naked cotton-clad yogi (*ras pa*). He is also distinctively depicted in the Path with the Fruit temple (Lam 'bras lha khang) of Palkhor (dPal 'khor) Monastery in Gyantse.<sup>378</sup> An important set of Drukpa lineage lama portraits were wrongly identified as abbots of Taklung in three American collections (one is shown in Fig. 1.7). The set was painted in an atypical style from about the first half of the seventeenth century. A distinctive portrait of Ling Repa at the Los Angeles County Museum belongs to this set (as well as eleven *thangkas* in two private collections).<sup>379</sup> This set demonstrates the futility of treating scattered lineage paintings individually.

Ling Repa's disciple in the Drukpa Kagyu lineage, Tsangpa Gyare, also has a somewhat distinct iconography. He is often shown wearing, as in Figure 8.4b, a distinctive shirt similar to a modern European vest, opening at the front and not to one side. In some later Bhutanese paintings, the front of his upper garment or vest is portrayed in the shape of a Y.

Detail of Fig. 8.4





FIG. 8.4A, detail  
Ling Repa

Drukpa Kagyu portraits of lamas from Bhutan or Tibet need to be carefully differentiated from those of other major and minor Kagyu traditions, especially the Drigung. (The Kagyu “meditation hats” or *sgom zhwa* worn by Drukpa lamas were similar.) Figure 8.1, for instance, was once misidentified as a “Drigung Kagyu Lama.”<sup>380</sup> It portrays a Drukpa Kagyu lama with his lineage, though the exact tradition remains unclear. (The main figure is apparently the great Drukpa scholiast Pema Karpo [Padma dkar po, 1527–1592].)

Most Bhutanese *thangkas* accessible to me seem to be in varieties of the Menri style. But it is also possible that some Khyenri traditions also penetrated Bhutanese painting at times. E. Gene Smith once asserted—without specifying his source—that the later Bhutanese painting style (*’Brug bris*) borrowed from both the classical Menri and Khyenri.<sup>381</sup> (The Khyenri was a minor tradition based mainly in the Lhokha district of southern Ü Province.) Such Khyenri-influenced paintings of Bhutan might have looked something like Figure 8.2, a Bhutanese rendering of a tantric deity with a highly ornate body nimbus in a style more reminiscent of a late-Khyenri than to either the Eri or Tsangpa schools of the later Menri.



FIG. 8.4B, detail  
Tsangpa Gyare

Still, such body nimbuses are not decisive, and the painting lacks the special ornate lotus seats of the Khyenri. Moreover, its clouds are two common Menri types. The topmost three gurus are floating on a stratocumulus cloud. The top four clouds are arrayed in a horizontal row near the upper edge of the painting. The cumulus cloud clusters beneath the two Drukpa lamas to the right and left of the central deity are not of the typical three-lobed Eri type. Both feature single swirls in the middle and tails that undulate up and away into the sky toward the border of the painting. The painting’s composition is symmetrical. The lama to the left with a long gray beard is probably Ngawang Namgyal; the lama with the shorter darker beard to the right may be the Ninth Je Khenpo, Shākya Rinchen (rJe Shākya Rin chen).

One decisive element for identifying many Bhutanese *thangkas* is the presence of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, 1594–1651), the prospective abbot (*zhabs drung*) of Ralung Monastery. After being rejected for the abbacy he left for Bhutan in the warmer southern borderlands where he ultimately established a Drukpa Kagyu theocracy, in open defiance of the Fifth Dalai Lama’s Ganden Phodrang

government. His long, pointed dark beard is iconographically distinct, as we find in Figure 8.2. There, as in many later depictions, he wears no inner “lama vest” under his upper robe, and an inner meditation band is visible under his upper robe.

Figure 8.3 depicts Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal with a brief lineage. The painting is symmetrical and features a solid dark blue sky. Green meadows fill most of the landscape and include both blue-green crags and brownish cliffs that follow Menri conventions. The horizon lies quite high within the composition, at the level of the three highest gurus. The painting features two snow-covered conical peaks and five stylized clouds colored white, pink, and gray. The central cloud is white and of the stylized stratocumulus type. The pink clouds in the upper-right and left corners protrude toward the center with two flat horizontal layers. The fluffy layers extend not just upward but also down.

Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal is depicted sitting on a stack of three mats: the top mat has a dark blue outer edge and a white center. The backrest cushion behind him has the opposite scheme: the center field is dark blue, while its outer edge is a border of white auspicious scarves. Multicolor tassels on both sides are the only decoration.

The figures are placed as in Diagram [A]. The first five gurus are the standard Dakpo Kagyu lineage down to Milarepa. Numbers 6 through 9 are less sure, but guru 9 wears a distinctive black hat. More than one lama bore the name Ngawang Namgyal. We should be careful not to confuse Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal with the “Beggar (*sprang po*) Ngawang Namgyal” who lived in Dolpo about a generation or two later; he commissioned many *thangkas*, including some surviving in the Rubin Museum of Art (as seen in Figs. 7.5–7.7).<sup>382</sup>

Figure 8.4 culminates in a series of Bhutanese masters who flourished in





FIG. 8.1  
 Lama of the Drukpa Kagyü (Pema Karpo?)  
 Tibet; 16th century  
 26 ½ x 19 ¾ in. (67.3 x 50.2 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2006.66.250 (HAR 362)  
 Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
 no. 113; D. Jackson 2008, fig. 4; and  
 D. Jackson 2008b, fig. 1.





FIG. 8.2  
Sahaja Cakrasamvara  
Bhutan; 18th or 19th century  
23 ¼ x 17 ¾ in. (59 x 44 cm)  
Essen collection, Museum der Kulturen,  
Basel (Inv. no. IId13659)  
Photograph by Hans Meyer-Veden  
© Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland  
Literature: G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo  
1989, vol. 2 p. 143 (II-311).

the nineteenth century. The arrangement of both its divine figures and landscape elements is mostly symmetrical. (The left side of the horizon features two snow mountains, while the right side has just one.) The sky is divided into two areas: an upper, larger zone which is dark blue, and a thinner strip along the horizon that is medium blue. No rocky crags are seen in the landscape. Three or four cloud types are employed. The top two rows are mostly of the stylized stratocumulus type. Near the central figure are clusters of cumulus clouds with trailing, undulating tails. The single clouds are bluish and greenish white, the composite clouds also

include colored pastel orange and pink (such as behind the two innermost snow peaks). The fringe of clouds behind the central figure is trimmed with a thin band of solid orange, which is rare in Tibetan painting. The colorful abstraction of the *makara* tail in the central backrest is also worth noting. In the landscape, three sharply pointed green mountains rise into the sky and are snowcapped only at their peaks. Below each snowy mountain water flows down a series of V-shaped valleys, culminating in a lake below. (Two similar mountains appear in Fig. 8.3.)

The throne and backrest of the principal lama are highly ornate, as is the cosmopolitan scene of the minor figures standing before him. He is an eminent lama with an entourage (as represented by no fewer than seven attendants). He receives homage and offerings from four very differently dressed foreign callers. One to the far left wears a white Moghul-period Indian turban bearing several colorful rolls (of Indian textiles?) on his shoulder. The one opposite him to the right seems to wear blue Chinese brocade robes and a red official hat with a *rank-button* or insignia on the top (*tog zhwa*). Below him stands a black-bearded man in a purple robe with a thick fur collar. On the other side of the central figure a Tibetan or Mongol soldier kneels, wearing an orange long-sleeved robe and a conical black helmet. The scene makes me wonder, was the main figure meant to represent Götshangpa, or was he a very eminent more recent Bhutanese lama who was considered to be the rebirth of Götshangpa?

The painting is also significant for being a complete portrayal of a later Drukpa lineage within a single *thangka*. It survived outside Bhutan and was published by P. Pal in 1984, plate 95, as from "Eastern Tibet, ca. 1750," yet it surely comes from Bhutan. Its large dimensions (50 by 35 inches) allowed all thirty-nine figures of the entire Drukpa





[A]		
	1	
2		3
4		5
	10	
6		7
8		9

FIG. 8.3  
Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal with a Brief  
Lineage  
Bhutan; 19th century  
29 x 21 in. (73.7 x 53.3 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.248 (HAR 360)  
Literature: M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999,  
no. 115.





[B]								
8	6	4	2	1	3	5	7	9
14	12	10				11	13	15
18	16						17	19
22	20						21	23
24				MF				25
26								27
28								29
30								31
36	34	32		38?		33	35	37

FIG. 8.4  
 Götshangpa Gönpo Dorje with a Lineage  
 Bhutan; early 19th century  
 50 x 35 in. (127 x 89 cm)  
 Rubin Museum of Art  
 C2003.19.3 (HAR 65249)  
 Literature: P. Pal in 1984, plate 95; M. Rhie  
 and R. Thurman 1999; D. Jackson 2008,  
 fig. 5; and D. Jackson 2008b, fig. 2.



Kagyü lineage of Bhutan down to the mid-nineteenth century to be portrayed. Each figure possesses identifying inscriptions in gold.

The minor figures are arranged as in Diagram [B]. Seven gurus appear below in the bottom register. The lineage perhaps ends with the slightly larger central figure of the bottom row (guru no. 38?).

The *thangka* thus seems to date to about the mid- or late nineteenth century. Based on his position and iconography (wearing a crown of the five lords of the buddha families, *rigs lnga*), the large main figure (MF) seems to be commissioned in honor or memory of a deceased master. The inscriptions, however, give his name as Götshang Gönpö Dorje, a well-known Drukpa Kagyü master of the thirteenth century whose connection with the present lineage and Bhutanese tradition is unknown to me. (The front inscription reads: *rgyal ba rgod tshang ba mgon po rdo rje 'chang la na mo*/.). The individual figures can be identified through inscriptions.<sup>383</sup>

Figure 8.5 depicts the great Drukpa Kagyü scholar Pema Karpo ('Brug chen Padma dkar po, 1527–1592), evidently with a partial later lineage. The main figure is identified by an inscription as the “Omniscient Pema Karpo” (Kun mkhyen Padma dkar po). Eighteen of the twenty minor figures are presumably part of a late Drukpa Kagyü lineage, as confirmed by the names beneath them. Their relative arrangement or chronological sequence within the painting is shown in Diagram [C]. But since this is just one in a set of lineal guru portraits, we do not yet know where those masters stood in the entire lineage; historically that is more important than their relative positions in the painting.

The painting’s placement of figures and arrangement of landscape elements is highly symmetrical; though some slight differences are found in the cloud placement and coloring on both sides



FIG. 8.5  
Pema Karpo with a Partial Bhutanese  
Drukpa Lineage  
Bhutan; 19th century  
28 x 19 ½ in. (71.1 x 49.5 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.2.6 (HAR 65622)

[C]				
4	2	1	3	5
8	6		7	9
10				11
	a1	MF	a2	
12				13
17	15	14	16	18



(note the single cloud on the level of the third register, to the right). The sky is dark blue, and the horizon lies at the level of the third horizontal register of gurus. The clouds all have the same stylized “stratocumulus” shape (as seen in numerous paintings from Bhutan and also Amdo (compare Figs. 6.6, 6.12 and 6.13). They lie in horizontal rows of single or double clouds, and they alternate in color: bluish and greenish white. Neither snowy peaks nor rocky crags are depicted.<sup>384</sup>

The four Bhutanese paintings (Figs 8.2–8.5) are too few for drawing firm stylistic conclusions. Still, it is hard to avoid the impression that Figures 8.3–8.5 derived from a tradition close to the Tsangri. Dark skies and crown elements spaced 1-3-1 predominate. Dark blue seat-back cushions draped with white scarves and fringed with peony-like flowers are almost universal and are not specific to the Tsangri. The landscapes of distinctive sharply pointed green snow-capped peaks appeared in two paintings (Figs 8.3 and 8.4). Such features must be compared with many other *thangkas* from Bhutan to see how widespread they actually were.

## PAINTINGS FROM MONGOLIA

Mongolia—together with Mongolian-speaking parts of modern Russia like Buriatia and the Kalmuk area—is the source of many interesting Tibetan Buddhist paintings and sculptures. Mongolian art has become better known after publications from Ulan Bator emerged in the 1980s.<sup>385</sup> Several other exhibition catalogs appeared in the West in the last two decades.<sup>386</sup> One very extensive publication (839 pages) is a two-volume catalog edited by Carmen Meinert (with text by Andrey Terentyev and Meinert) documenting about four hundred pieces of Mongolian Buddhist art and ritual objects, which came into my hands when this book was about to

be published.<sup>387</sup> Entitled *Buddha in the Yurt*, it was published in two bilingual editions (English-Russian and German-Mongolian) and promises to become an important reference work also in Mongolia and Russia.

A still longer publication (1,016 pages, vol. 1, parts 1 and 2) of Mongolian art appeared a few months ago, too late for me to consult it, though it warrants mention. Entitled *Mongolian Buddhist Art: Masterpieces from the Museums of Mongolia*, it was edited by Zara Fleming and J. Lkhagvademchig Shastri. According to its publisher (Serindia Publications, Chicago), it “presents for the first time 441 masterpieces of Mongolian Buddhist art from five major Mongolian museums: the Bogd Khan Palace Museum, the Chojin Lama Temple Museum, the Zanabazar Museum of Fine Arts, the Erdene Zuu Museum, and the Danzanravjaa Museum.”

In the following section, I make no pretense to presenting paintings that are typical of Mongolian styles. For my purposes it is enough to find works of art that can be confidently attributed to a Mongolian provenance. Most of the images I have chosen have a connection with the eminent local hierarch Zanabazar (1635–1723), the first of the Jetsün Dampa line of ruling incarnate lamas of Mongolia. He was not only the subject of sacred portraiture but also one of the foremost artists in Mongolia during his time.

### *Zanabazar with His Previous Incarnations*

Figure 8.6 depicts Zanabazar, the First Jetsün Dampa, together with his previous incarnations and one successor. This painting confirms him as the reincarnation of Jetsün Tāranātha from Jonang Monastery in Tsang. Its composition was presumably disseminated in Mongolia through block printing. (Several similar *thangkas* are

known from museum collections in Germany.)<sup>388</sup>

The figures are symmetrical except for two figures squeezed in at the bottom right vertical column, where only one figure was originally meant to be. (See gurus number 15 and 16 in Diagram [D].) The sky is dark and the landscape beneath relatively simple, with just one or two clouds. (The horizon cuts across at the level of the five highest gurus.) The only complicated feature is the pool of water below, from which an aquatic plant arises bearing precious and auspicious things. Most of the minor figures lack body nimbuses; their head nimbuses are blue, green, pink, and orange. The gurus are shown in partial profile.

One typically Mongolian detail is the use of parallel radiating gold lines to decorate the lotus petals of the main figure’s seat. Many other Mongolian *thangkas* have such lines, though I have not seen them elsewhere.<sup>389</sup>

The painting has the same composition as the *thangka* in the Fine Arts Museum in Ulan Bator published by Niamosorgym Tsultem.<sup>390</sup> There too, the main figure is a youthful orthodox Geluk lama: a full monk holding his right hand to his heart and his begging bowl in his lap on the palm of his left hand. He holds between thumbs and index fingers the stems of two lotuses. Their flowers are behind his shoulders and support a *vajra* and bell. At the bottom center is a black rectangular area filled by an inscription paying homage to the central figure, the second Jetsun Dampa Losang Tenpe Drönme (Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me, 1724–1757).<sup>391</sup>

Figure 8.6 thus portrays two Jetsun Dampas: no. 16, the first, and no. 17, the central figure, the second. Number 15 in the lineage, Tāranātha, wears a red pandit hat with ear flaps hanging down. Its structure can be shown as in diagram [D]. Names are written in gold in the rectangular boxes below most figures.<sup>392</sup>





[D]				
		1		
4	2		3	5
6				7
8				9
10		17		11
12				13
				15
14				16

FIG. 8.6  
The Jetsun Dampa with Previous  
Incarnations  
Mongolia; 18th or 19th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Collection of Joachim Baader, Munich,  
Germany



Paintings that depict still longer versions of the Jetsun Dampa's prior lives are also known.<sup>393</sup> The same construction is called by Patricia Berger "Portrait of Zanabazar and the appearances into which his spirit was reborn."<sup>394</sup> Both of those images have twenty-three figures in all, ending with the central figure, Zanabazar, who holds a *vajra* to his heart and bell in his lap (as in Figs. 8.7–8.9).

### Portraits of Zanabazar

In addition to the paintings that include Zanabazar's previous lives (such as Fig. 8.6), several portraits of Zanabazar without them are known in Mongolian art. Some are believed to be self-portraits.<sup>395</sup> Figure 8.7 depicts Zanabazar without his previous lives. An inscription on the table before his throne identifies him with the words: "Homage to Lord Tenpe Gyaltshen!" (Tib. *rje bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan la na mol*/).

This *thangka* (Fig. 8.7) was thus another among several standard ways to portray Zanabazar. The composition is mostly symmetrical, with the principal figure looking to the right. The sky is medium blue containing two types of clouds. He sits on a triple mat with a deep blue upper surface decorated with a brocade pattern. A red body nimbus radiates gold rays. Before that stands a more realistic backrest consisting of a deep-blue mat with brocade cloud patterns lined on top and sides with long white silk offering scarves. This painting basically follows the portrait type found in P. Berger and T. Tse Bartholomew 1995, a fine cast sculpture: no. 95, Portrait of Zanabazar. (His image was widely proliferated in Mongolia, both through block prints and casting molds.)

The image depicts Zanabazar with two standing monk attendants bowing obsequiously: one offers him a vase, the other a ritual mandala offering. In the small *thangka* above his head we find his revered guru, the First Panchen Lama of



Tashilhunpo (Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1567–1662). A *thangka* within a *thangka* is an unusual touch, rarely seen in Tibetan paintings. Here Zanabazar's head touches the brocade frame of his teacher's portrait. An open parasol at the top flutters with red and orange scarves going right and left. The parasol is pleasantly ambiguous; it pays respect to either the central figure or his guru in the small *thangka* above him.

Figure 8.8 is another rendering of basically the same portrait as Figure 8.7, published by Niamosorgym Tsultem in his book on the Mongolian national

FIG. 8.7  
The First Jetsun Dampa Zanabazar  
Mongolia; 19th century  
Textile; silk appliqué and embroidery, with  
gold and silver couching, coral beads  
33 ¾ x 24 ¾ in. (85.7 x 62.9 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2007.14.1 (HAR 81827)





FIG. 8.8  
The First Jetsun Dampa, Zanabazar  
Mongolia; 18th or 19th century  
Textile; appliqué  
26  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 19  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (68 x 49.5 cm)  
Bogd-Khan Palace Museum, Ulan Bator  
After: N. Tsultem 1986, fig. 88.

painting tradition.<sup>396</sup> It departs from Figure 8.7 in several minor details, most noticeably in the deep blue brocade used behind and above the main figure. Rather than dragons, the brocade has another auspicious Chinese design, the Chinese character “*shen*,” meaning “longevity.”

Figure 8.9 is a finer rendering of Fig. 8.7, here as a much larger painting on cloth with a more elaborate throne backrest and landscape. It or a similar painting presumably served as the original for such simplified later appliqué versions as Figures 8.7 and 8.8. The sky is dark blue at the top and lighter as it approaches the horizon. No border

demarcates the sky from the green meadows below. The clouds are colored with soft pastel shades; the central cluster is outlined with a dark scalloped border. This fine painting could be from Tibet, though it is not identical with the Tsangri of Tsang.

Figure 8.10 is another of Zanabazar’s widely distributed portraits; it was either painted after a xylograph or is a painted xylograph. It is even less orthodox in its iconography than the previous ones. The great lama sits on a throne in his robes, and before him is a small table covered with religious paraphernalia. But in the middle of the table a large food bowl holds several pieces of meat. In his hands Zanabazar grasps a piece of white, pink-edged meat, slicing a strip with his knife, which he holds, blade pointed upward in his right hand.

As a Mongol, and hence by definition a meat eater, Zanabazar is shown enjoying his meat. Most high lamas—whether Tibetan or Mongolian—eat



FIG. 8.9  
The First Jetsun Dampa Zanabazar  
Mongolia; 18th or 19th century  
54  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 59 in. (138 x 150 cm)  
Fine Arts Museum, Ulan Bator, Mongolia  
After: N. Tsultem 1982, *The Eminent Mongolian Sculptor—G. Zanabazar*, fig. 4;  
N. Tsultem 1986, fig. 105.

meat, yet they bless or purify the meat beforehand through prayers.<sup>397</sup> Could Zanabazar be praying through this image for the purification of his meat-eating countrymen? (I have seen a print of another small xylograph of the same theme in a private collection in Germany where the mantra: *E ma ho! Om pha ni pha ni swā hā! Om āḥ hum!* is written on the bottom in Tibetan. There he holds the knife with his left hand.)

In Figure 8.10, the sky is mostly dark blue with a thick band of lighter blue above the horizon at the elbow of the main figure. A parasol with decorative scarves drapes down, paying homage unambiguously to the main figure. That central figure looks straight ahead, his head tilted slightly to the right, a realistic touch. His backrest consists of a mat lined with orange silk and with





FIG. 8.10  
Zanabazar, the First Jetsun Dampa,  
Eating Meat  
Mongolia; 19th century  
11  $\frac{3}{8}$  x 9  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (28.9 x 23.2 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.587 (HAR 1089)

cloud brocade motifs below; the top and sides are lined with white silk scarves. The backrest is decorated by two flat blue and white silk ribbon tassels each hanging from a blue, pink, and white cloud motif. (Similar tassels were seen on the mat behind Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in Figure 8.3.)

Figure 8.11 is a block print portraying Zanabazar again eating meat. Published by Patricia Berger,<sup>398</sup> it is excerpted from N. Tsultem's book on Zanabazar.<sup>399</sup> According to Berger, Zanabazar became the "mirror of his people's cultural aspirations."<sup>400</sup> With this and many similar images, he had no doubt entered the realm of Mongolian folk religion.



FIG. 8.11  
Zanabazar, the First Jetsun Dampa,  
Eating Meat  
Mongolia; 19th century  
Dimensions unknown  
Fine Arts Museum, Ulan Bator, Mongolia  
After: P. Berger 1995, p. 261, Fig. 1, "Zanabazar;" N. Tsultem 1982, *The Eminent Mongolian Sculptor—G. Zanabazar*, pl. 104.



FIG. 8.12  
Zanabazar, the First Jetsun Dampa,  
Eating Meat  
Mongolia; 19th century  
3  $\frac{7}{8}$  x 3  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (9.8 x 8.6 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.62.1 (HAR 65720)



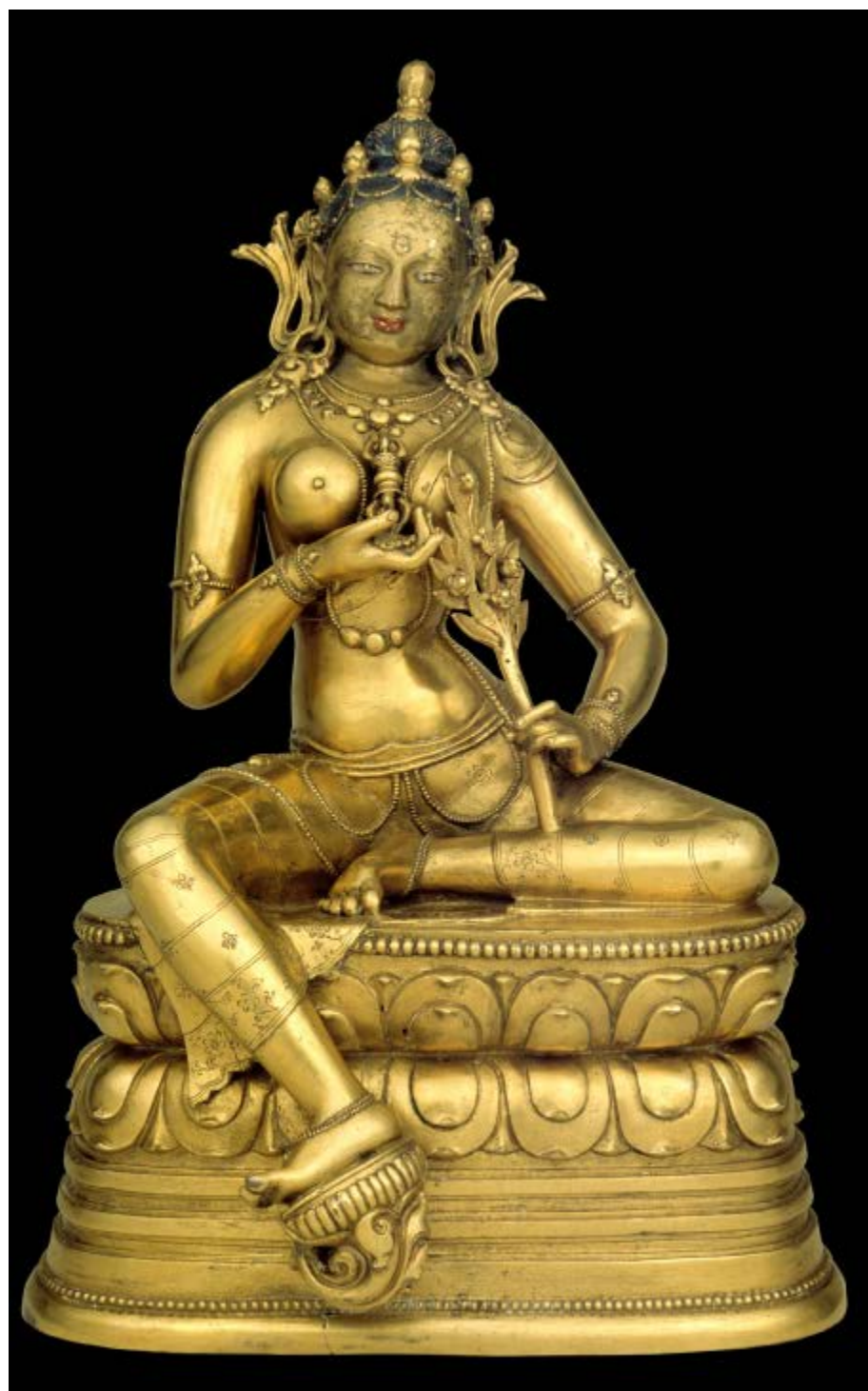
Fig. 8.12 again shows Zanabazar cutting a slice of mutton. It does not follow the block-print depicted by Figure 8.11. Here he holds one piece of meat higher, slicing with his knife tip pointing down. His posture is more erect and he wears long-sleeved orange Mongol robes. The table before him includes a bowl of fruit and other non-meat items. If it were not for his short hair and the orange robe hanging over one of his shoulders, he might be mistaken for a layman eating meat. He thus looks very different than in Figure 8.11, and the jarring impact of an “ordained lama slicing meat” is lessened.

In this painting Zanabazar has already received homage from one of his disciples or patrons; a silk scarf lies across his lap partly obscured by his thick whitish lower robe. The painting is symmetrical and very simple. The sky is light blue and it contains three white clouds. The backrest is bright red, covered with golden brocade designs. Its top and sides are hung with white silk ceremonial scarves.

#### *A Statue by Zanabazar*

Zanabazar was not just a Buddhist hierarch born into a noble Mongolian family as the reincarnation (*trulku*) of a high Tibetan lama. He was also a practicing artist. Where he really excelled was sculpture. He and his workshop produced many exquisite cast bronze images, one example of which is depicted in Figure 8.13. This image of Marichi belongs to the “school of Zanabazar.”

This statue of Marichi (Tib. 'Od zer can ma) probably originally belonged to a set of the Twenty-one Tārās formerly in the Bogdo Khan Palace Museum.<sup>401</sup> Zanabazar's distinctive statues were first published in 1982 in the multilingual book of N. Tsultem entitled *The Eminent Mongolian Sculptor—G. Zanabazar*. Subsequently,



Patricia Berger summarized his career in her chapter in the catalog *Mongolia: The Legacy of Chinggis Khan*. More statues were published by Rossi and Rossi in the 2004 catalog *Treasures from Mongolia* with an introduction by Gilles Béguin.<sup>402</sup>

Characteristic of Zanabazar's statues are the distinctive lotus petals and the series of pearl-like dots that

FIG. 8.13  
Marichi  
Mongolia; 17th century  
Made by Zanabazar or his workshop (cast metal with painted face and hair)  
Gilt copper alloy  
15 5/8 x 10 3/8 x 7 1/4 in.  
(39.7 x 26.4 x 18.4 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2005.16.26 (HAR 65449)





FIG. 8.13, back

continue with the lotus petals all the way around the image (Tib. *pad skor ma?*). Also noteworthy are the gem patterns on crowns and S-curve armlets. Many statues have a crossed *vajra* on the bottom plate. The sculptor paid careful attention also to details on the rear of the statue.

#### PAINTINGS FROM QING-DYNASTY CHINA

Tibetan Buddhist art was significant in northern China, especially during the Mongol Yuan, Chinese Ming, and Manchu Qing dynasties.<sup>403</sup> Among the paintings of the Qing, some are examples of Chinese imperial “Lamaist” art—paintings made for Tibetan lamas or for the emperor with the guidance

of resident court lamas.<sup>404</sup> One corpus of such *thangkas* survived at the Qing-dynasty temple of Yonghegong in Beijing<sup>405</sup> and another in a Qing palace temple.<sup>406</sup>

In the following pages I would like to present several paintings and sculptures from Qing-dynasty China.<sup>407</sup> Some are imperial commissions from temples sponsored by the emperor in northern China or Inner Mongolia, as at Chengde (Jehol).

Figure 8.14 portrays the Arhat Rahula as one of the Sixteen Arhats, seated in a landscape of fruit trees and rocky blue and green crags attended by a standing monk. The faces have an unusual amount of shading. An array of puffy clouds with three main lobes and horizontal tails floats in a sky of intense blue at the top fading to a much softer tone at the horizon. The buddhas and other sacred figures seem Tibetan, while the landscape is distinctively Chinese. Yet it is not pure Chinese; it has gone through a Tibetan filter and then back to China, as part of the Tibetan conventions followed by the Qing court.<sup>408</sup>

In Tibetan art the landscape usually remains “in the background,” clearly subordinate. But here, by Tibetan aesthetic standards, it has taken over the painting. Most of the clouds are a simplified three-lobed cumulus type with single swirls in the center on both right and left. The clouds include a long, flat horizontal tail and they form together the Chinese auspicious symbol “ruyi” meaning “as you wish.”<sup>409</sup>

A slightly different type of cumulus clouds also appears under the two buddhas, with a large central swirl. Both types have a base color of pale green or pale blue. In addition, horizontal bands of (possibly altostratus) cloud banks fill the upper-right and left corners behind the neighboring pale green cumulus clouds. The cumulus “as you wish” clouds fill the sky in a regular nearly symmetrical pattern.





FIG. 8.14  
The Arhat Rahula as one of the Sixteen  
Arhats  
China; 18th century  
52  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 29  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (133 x 74.9 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2004.9.1 (HAR 65363)

Each cumulus cloud has a distinctive white middle, or upper, lobe. Such evenly distributed clouds with white highlighting of their upper lobe are a hallmark of a Sino-Tibetan Qing imperial court style of the mid- to late eighteenth century, the reign of the Qianlong emperor (1736–1796). Paintings of this

type from that period have been documented by Terese Tse Bartholomew in two publications.<sup>410</sup>

Figure 8.15 is a high Sino-Tibetan rendering of a famous central Tibetan set of *thangkas* that originally was created at Tashilhunpo. It depicts Bhāvaviveka as one of the previous Panchen Rinpoches, though this rendition of the set was commissioned by the Qianlong emperor. It presumably was meant for the temple of Xumifushou built in 1779 by the emperor for the Panchen Rinpoche Losang Palden Yeshe, who was expected to visit China the following year. Xumifushou is Chinese for Tashilhunpo, and the emperor had it built at Chengde (Jehol) in Inner Mongolia as a small-scale copy of the original temple in Tsang.<sup>411</sup> (Some paintings from Chengde bear a labeling inscription specifying where within a specific chapel of the temple they were meant to hang.)

The painting's sky here is darker at the horizon and becomes lighter as it continues upward, the opposite of normal Tibetan practice. As in Figure 8.14, the painter has evenly distributed the clouds within the sky, though the artist generally follows the original composition. On the horizon of the landscape below the tantric deity, one cloud has a very long horizontal tail. The clouds are painted base colors of faint gray blue or soft pastel green. Once again the highest lobe of each (mostly three-lobed) cloud is highlighted with white, giving the painting a sense of exquisite refinement.<sup>412</sup>

Here a specific indication of Chinese production is the ink monochrome landscape painted on the standing screen behind the principal figure (a painting within a painting). It is in a style popular in China at this time and is a common convention of Chinese figure painting, especially when establishing the subject as a refined scholar. (Compare the Narthang or Tashilhunpo









FIG. 8.16  
Bodhisattva Suryaprabha  
57 ¾ x 27 ¾ in. (146.7 x 70.5 cm)  
China; Qing dynasty, Qianlong reign  
(1736–1795)  
Private Collection  
Photograph by David De Armas

FIG. 8.15 (opposite page)  
Bhāvaviveka as a Previous Existence of the  
Panchen Rinpoches  
Chengde (Jehol), Inner Mongolia, China;  
18th century  
53 ¼ x 33 ¼ in. (135.3 x 84.5 cm)  
Gift of Natacha Rambova, 1959  
Philadelphia Museum of Art (1959–156-1)  
“Acarya Bhavaviveka Converts a  
Nonbeliever to Buddhism, One of the  
Previous Incarnations of the Panchen Lama,  
Sino-Tibetan, Qing Dynasty, Qianlong  
reign”  
Literature: Chogyam Trungpa 1975, Visual  
Dharma, no. 27, “Kadampa School.”  
(HAR 87022)

xylograph block (HAR 79176) with Tibetan copies such as HAR 71923 or HAR 91080.)<sup>413</sup>

Fig. 8.16 is another good example of the kind of Tibetan Buddhist art produced for the imperial court under the Qianlong emperor. Note its similarities with Figures 8.14 and 8.15a. They all combine Indian iconometry for the figures with Chinese blue-green landscapes. Especially distinctive is the Chinese auspicious imagery, such as the “as you wish” shape of the clouds (which can be considered a mark of Chinese production).

#### *The Sandalwood Buddha of China*

Figure 8.17 depicts a famous Indian wooden statue of Buddha Śākyamuni, standing within a plain black field. The original statue was believed to have been brought to China many centuries ago from India, via Central Asia. Called by Tibetans “the Sandalwood Lord of China” (*rgya nag gi tsandan jo bo*), we can simply call it the “Sandalwood Buddha.”<sup>414</sup> A similar early wooden copy of the “Udayana Buddha” survives in the Seiryō-ji temple of Kyoto, Japan: the Seiryō-ji Shaka.<sup>415</sup>

The story of the Sandalwood Buddha was summarized by Kimiaki Tanaka in his second Hahn Foundation catalog.<sup>416</sup> Andrey Terentyev contributed a brief monograph to the history and vicissitudes of the statue.<sup>417</sup> The statue was believed to have been made in Buddha Śākyamuni’s honor by the Indian king Udayana of Kosambi, who greatly missed the Buddha when he visited the divine realms to teach his late mother.

The old wooden statue was believed to have been originally made in India and brought in the fourth century by way of Khotan in Central Asia to China. It was worshiped by successive generations of Chinese Buddhists; in the Qing dynasty it was housed in Beijing in a temple named Zhantansi (Sandalwood Temple).

In 1900, during the unrest of the Boxer Rebellion, that temple was destroyed by fire; the buddha image was stolen by pious Buriat Mongols who smuggled it to their homeland, where it miraculously survived the period of Communist persecution in the 1930s and remains today in an especially built new temple.<sup>418</sup>

The original Sandalwood Buddha was thus a highly revered image. It inspired much derivative devotional art, both statues and paintings, mainly in China but also in Tibet and Mongolia. Figure 8.17 is a later Chinese painting, depicting the standing Buddha as a large central figure with gold lines and pigment over a virtually empty black background, a Chinese format that does not exist in Tibet, certainly not for buddhas. It is noteworthy for showing the Buddha without any head ornament or crown on the head protuberance (*uṣṇīṣa*). The image also possesses a Buddhist rosary of white beads interspersed with three red ones.

Figure 8.18 is a cast metal sculpture copy of the Sandalwood Buddha. It dates to about the eighteenth or nineteenth century, during the Qing dynasty. Here the Buddha is shown wearing an ornate headpiece with an animal head in the front, set jewels, and an ornamental scarf lifting in the wind on either side. Just under ten inches tall, it is considerably smaller than the original statue.

Fig. 8.19 is a painting of the Chinese Sandalwood Buddha that was preserved at Nenying Monastery in the upper Nyang Valley of Tsang. It is large, more than eight feet (2.5 meters) high. It may have been meant to be an accurate painted copy, the same size as the original. It may have been among the gifts for the Chenpo Ngödrup Rinchen (Chen po dNgos grub rin chen), representative of the Nenying abbot Jamyang Rinchen Gyaltsen (1364–1422)—if he traveled to the imperial court in 1412. The painting contains an inscription in Chinese dating it to the seventeenth day of the fourth month of the Ming Emperor





FIG. 8.17  
Painting of the Sandalwood Buddha of  
China  
China; 18th century  
27  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 16  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. (70.5 x 41.3 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1996.27.3 (HAR 499)





FIG. 8.18  
Cast Metal Copy of the Sandalwood  
Buddha of China  
Tibet; 18th or 19th century  
Gilt copper alloy  
Height 9  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (24.8 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art (Gift of John and  
Berthe Ford)  
C2005.9.1 (HAR 65406)

Yongle's tenth year of reign (i.e., 1412, since he reigned from 1403–1424).<sup>419</sup> (I have not been able to study the Tibetan inscription.)

Figure 8.20 depicts the Sandalwood Buddha surrounded by a number of lamas and deities, including the eight bodhisattvas and three protective deities. Among the three yellow-hat lamas above, the two lower ones seem to be the First Panchen Lama and one of his disciples (possibly the Fifth Dalai Lama).

The pigments alone are enough



FIG. 8.19  
Painting of the Sandalwood Buddha of  
China  
Detail of inscribed and dated Chinese scroll  
painting  
Ming court, China; 1412  
98  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 51  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (2.5 x 1.3 m)  
Photographed at Nenying Monastery, Tsang  
Province, Tibet  
Photograph by Helmut Neumann  
Literature: D. Jackson 1996, fig. 42.

to identify it as probably coming from somewhere far to the north and east, such as the borderlands of Amdo, Inner Mongolia, or Mongolia proper. If it is indeed from Mongolia, the third lama could be the First Jetsun Dampa Zanabazar. Though painted in a Tibetan and not Chinese style, the cumulus clouds do not have the usual three-lobed shape—they become almost triangular. The two whirls that are visible on most clouds rotate in opposite directions, a motif I have never seen in Tibet. The





FIG. 8.20  
Painting of the Sandalwood Buddha of China with Lamas and Deities  
Mongolia?; late 17th or 18th century  
25 1/8 x 16 3/4 in. (64 x 42.5 cm)  
Hahn Cultural Foundation  
Literature: K. Tanaka 1999, no. 18.

spiral whirls end in a dark dot or loop. I cannot attribute a more exact provenance to the painting until another soundly attributed example of this same style can be found.

Figure 8.21 is a still more recent two-dimensional representation of the Sandalwood Buddha. Printed from a Mongolian xylograph block, it depicts the Sandalwood Buddha surrounded by the Sixteen Arhats. If the dating to the nineteenth century is correct, it shows



FIG. 8.21  
The Sandalwood Buddha of China and the Sixteen Arhats  
Mongolia; 19th century  
Xylograph on cloth  
Private Collection  
Literature: A. Terentyev 2010, p. 5.

the statue was known and highly revered by Buddhists of Mongolia even before being spirited away by Buriat Mongols from a Beijing temple in 1900.

As Karl Debreczeny kindly informed me, the Sixteen Arhats here are depicted according to the Chan monk-painter Guanxiu (832–912)! This is a very clear painting reference.<sup>420</sup>

### *Doubtful Cases*

One imposing work of possibly Sino-Tibetan art because of its size is Figure 8.22. This huge, complicated painting is meant to pay homage to its main figure, the Fourth Demo Rinpoche, Lhawang Gelek Gyaltsen (Lha dbang rgyal mtshan, 1631–1668). The inscriptions along each side of the central figure are verses of blessing composed by the Fifth Dalai Lama. Painted on a dark





FIG. 8.22  
The Fourth Demo Rinpoche  
Tibet; mid-17th century  
99 x 62 in. (251.5 x 157.5 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
F1997.45.2 (HAR 578)







background, a tiny landscape section appears on both sides near the front corners of his seat. Single cloud-wreathed mountains of different types (one a blue-green crag and the other conical) appear on both sides. The landscape background color is dark green.

Far more prominent than the dark green landscape are the clouds of several shapes that occur with six base colors: white and faint pastel blue, green, purple, yellow, and pink. In one composite cluster of clouds surrounding Atiśa, five of those colors are used. The backdrop of the central figure's throne is fringed with grayish clouds, only the edges of which can be discerned in most places. Near the bottom more can be seen. Each cloud element turns out to be halves of three-lobed cumulus clouds with single whirls in the centers of each half—thus whole clouds have two whirls in all. (No outer trim was applied.)

Smaller clouds of the same basic three-lobed cumulus shape can be seen in the cloud cluster around Padmasambhava above left, including a pair of pink and pastel orange clouds each. The same elements are prominently used in the cloud clusters in the upper-right and left corners where offering deities stand. Golden inscriptions are found on both sides.

Figure 8.23 is another doubtful case. It depicts Tsongkhapa according to one of Khedrup's five visions of his guru, a classic Geluk composition. As in Figure 8.15, the painter was constrained by the need to follow a central-Tibetan original. The sky seems to be a solid dark blue. Clouds figure prominently in the earthly landscape and the heavens or

pure realms above, painted with the base colors white, bluish gray, and pink. Back shaded and outlined with crisp lines of dark indigo around their borders, the clouds depart from the normal usage of central-Tibetan Menri styles.

The painting seemed to me at first glance to be a possible work of Sino-Tibetan art. But when we examine it more closely, we see that its clouds are definitely not distinctively Chinese like Figures 8.14–8.16. Instead, they consist mostly of three-lobed cumulus clusters with three swirls in their centers. The landscape is noteworthy for dividing its green meadows into hills with many crag-like striations, which for me still seems foreign, from a central-Tibetan perspective. It may actually come from eastern Tibet.<sup>421</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

As shown in the preceding eight chapters, the Menri style in its several varieties was the most widely commissioned style in all five provinces of Tibet during the last three or four centuries. It also prevailed as dominant style throughout most of the remaining parts of the Tibetan Buddhist realm; distinctive types flourished in such outlying Tibetan Buddhist countries as Mongolia and Bhutan. To a greater or lesser extent, the latest Tibetan Buddhist painting styles became identified with provinces, large monasteries, or other locales where they were mainly based.

Through the quick survey presented here, we could begin the process of identifying the main provincial and local styles in each Tibetan province during the last two or three centuries. We could also identify a few paintings that could be reliably attributed to the three outlying Tibetan Buddhist lands. The existence of several local painting traditions in each Tibetan province (including hybrid styles) made classification difficult without further subdividing

into more regional variations or adding a minor sect-based painting school (Drigung style). We still need to see in more detail how each tradition links up historically and visually with the three main classical styles of central Tibet—primarily the Menri, but also the Gardri and Khyenri.<sup>422</sup>

Even now this much seems clear: To get a global perspective of Tibetan painting, we first need to nourish and refine many local perspectives. Each local tradition deserves careful investigation in its own right, mindful that other competing styles existed—if not in the same monastery, county, or district, then certainly elsewhere in the same province. Great care is still needed when dealing with paintings from poorly known places or traditions. Why attribute a painting to a certain province if hard evidence is lacking? At the very least, we should first articulate a few succinct stylistic rules for identifying each main regional or local school, knowing full well that such criteria may not work with hybrid styles or certain special iconographic themes. Where firm documentation or other convincing evidence is lacking, sagacious silence may be best. After all, whatever mistaken identifications we now make may be uncritically taken as the gospel truth for decades to come.

FIG. 8.23  
Tsongkhapa  
Tibet; 18th century  
Ink and colors on cotton  
24 1/8 x 17 1/4 in. (61.1 x 43.8 cm)  
Transfer from the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, Gift of Katherine Ball (B72D66)  
© Asian Art Museum of San Francisco  
(HAR 69416)







## *Looking East, Facing Up: Paintings in Karma Gardri Styles in Ladakh and Zangskar*

ROB LINROTHE

We get art history's writing wrong if we take it to come essentially after art. If we are to get the shape of that writing right (if we are to understand the terms on which it gives itself essentially to reading), we have to see it as belonging to—emergent within—the terms of its object's visibility, and so need to think about it as structured by that particular shape.<sup>423</sup>

TODAY IT TAKES a practiced eye to determine the roots and antecedents of contemporary Buddhist painting in Ladakh and Zangskar. The “official” Dharamsala Eri (E bris) style and its variants are having an increasing impact in Geluk (dGe lugs) contexts for both regions, while the earlier orientation toward Tashilhunpo Monastery and the Tsangri style (gTsang bris) is still visible in murals and in portable paintings. By the eighteenth through the early twentieth century, many Geluk monks and a few artists from Ngari (including Spiti, Ladakh, and Zangskar), studied in Shigatse's Tashilhunpo and to a lesser extent at Lhasa's Drepung Monasteries, both having had long-standing connections to the western regions.<sup>424</sup> When the monks and other pilgrims returned west, they brought with them the best tokens they could afford of those travels. The finest of these were adopted by artists and patrons as lodestones of their own artistic aspirations. At least through the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and

beginning as early as the eleventh century, there was a great deal of localization and creative adaptation in Ladakh and Zangskar, but after that there was an increasing homogeneity of harmonious Tsangri color schemes, landscape formulas, and polished compositions, even in murals created by local artists in Zangskar. Every Geluk monastery or village shrine seems to have the same standardized set of Panchen Lamas and their pre-incarnations, from Phe in western Zangskar to Lhasa and northeast into Amdo. The arhats based on Ming-dynasty paintings were similarly distilled and distributed throughout the Geluk realm.

By this time, the Sakya (Sa skya) lineage had little presence in Ladakh and Zangskar, except at Matho, or Mangtro (Mang spro), Monastery, which still houses an impressive collection of metalwork images and paintings reflecting the refined taste typical of Sakya hierarchs. The Nyingma (rNying ma) and the Kagyu (bKa' brgyud) lineages resisted the hegemony of Geluk visual culture, at least to a certain extent. As David Jackson has already

documented, the Drigung ('Bri gung) Kagyu maintained Driri ('Bri bris) painting in Ladakh at Phyang and Lamayuru Monasteries, though sometimes mixed the darker skies associated with the Tsangri style. The Drukpa ('Brug pa) Kagyu in Ladakh and Zangskar retained strong ties to Bhutan, which like these kingdoms, prided itself on political and cultural independence even though all three were firmly circumscribed within a Tibetan sphere. The impact of Bhutanese sensibilities in Ladakh and Zangskar can be seen in the murals and paintings in Hemis, Stagna, and Bardan, as well as at other Drukpa monasteries in the region. There were and are also connections to the non-Bhutanese branch of the Drukpa Kagyu, the so-called Northern Drukpas. Sustained institutional links tied Ladakh and Zangskar to central Tibet and Bhutan, and these ties go a long way to explain the related cultural expressions. By no means are the Drukpa arts of Ladakh and Bhutan always identical; individual creativity and innovation existed, and not a simple center and periphery dependency. However, definite relationships arose among these modules

Fig. 9.23, detail

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs by the author



of Buddhist culture; the differences can be quite subtle.

Unlike these enduring historical connections, links between Ladakh and Zangskar—on the extreme westward extension of the Tibetan cultural horizon—and Kham (Khams)—on the eastern edge of the Tibetan world—were much more tenuous and much less visible. Over the course of the eighteenth through twentieth century, wanderers from Kham appear in the records of Ladakh and Zangskar. But there were no known regular missions to Kham (or vice versa), no dormitories created for the use of Ladakhi and Zangskar monks as there were at Tashilhunpo, no estates granted to support royal scions studying at Drepung,<sup>425</sup> no renowned artists studying in Kham—as Zhedpa Dorje (Bzhad pa rDo rje, d. 1816) of Dzonkhul (rDzong khul) in Zangskar had done in Bhutan<sup>426</sup>—and no marriage alliances with the Kham aristocratic families as there were with those of central Tibet.<sup>427</sup>

Except possibly through its contribution to the art of Bhutan, the Karma Gardri (Karma sGar bris), the most distinctive painting style of Kham, had little impact in Ladakh and Zangskar. Karma Gardri does not usually figure in the history of the art of its western counterparts. One would expect it to be clearly visible if it were present in the west, because, as Jackson's chapter 5 in this volume lays out, the Karma Gardri style is visually recognizable by many of its features, even when they are merged with Mensar (New Menri) in the Khamri (Khams bris) style followed by many Kham artists. This Karma Gardri style may be a little too simplistically considered exclusive to southeastern Tibet (for it was followed in the main Karma Kagyu monastery in central Tibet), too facily seen as following Chinese precedents as a direct consequence of its geographic proximity to Sichuan and other centers of Chinese culture, and too tightly connected to the Karma

Kagyu lineage by the conventional label of "Karma Gardri" (the "Karma[pa] encampment" style). At the same time it was convincingly brought to an apex by the great teacher and patron Situ Panchen, the subject of a previous volume in this series.<sup>428</sup> Neither Ladakh nor Zangskar is acknowledged in that art historical narrative (neither term appears in the index to Jackson's volume), and it would be just short of shocking to find artists of those two regions working in the Karma Gardri style.

Yet in fact, models of this encampment style were available to nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists, and continue to be available to twenty-first-century artists in Ladakh and Zangskar had they cause to search the holdings of some of the lesser-known monasteries and shrines. Recently, an important set of paintings done by the hand of the Fourteenth Karmapa was seen in Korzok, on the shores of Tsomoriri, in eastern Ladakh. At least two other encampment-style paintings, including one belonging to a Situ Panchen-designed set of Eight Great Siddhas, have come to light in the same monastery. Other paintings in the Karma Gardri style have been observed in the Markha Valley, and in Zangskar (David Jackson has also found evidence of recent Karma Gardri painters in Dolpo and Spiti, as mentioned in chapter one). This essay gives some details of these rare sightings. More will probably be revealed when the rich monastic treasures are comprehensively surveyed. We can make no claim to the artistic impact these had on the local production of art. My working assumption is that all of these portable paintings were produced in Kham or by Kham artists working elsewhere and then brought to Ladakh and Zangskar; had they been local productions, one could expect at least some murals to have been produced in the same style. It is instructive that such paintings were available for artists to

study or emulate but that they did not seem inspired to appropriate the style. Not only are regimes of artistic training implied by this disinterest—in other words, how artists learn and develop painting skills—it also indicates what truly determines dominant visual styles in a Tibetan Buddhist monastic context. Since artists and patrons had visual options, it strengthens the force of their choices toward the styles of western central Tibet and Bhutan. Eventually they even largely left behind their own heritage derived from the Kashmiri style, Khache (Kha che), a style traced back to the eleventh century and renewed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the conclusion, after examination of material evidence and issues of style, social and religious history, patronage, and artistic production in Ladakh and Zangskar, we will return to the hypothesis that, ultimately, institutional connections, not aesthetic power or novelty, determined the choices made by monastic authorities in terms of the style affiliations for commissions to affiliated artists (for murals and sets of portable paintings) in this region during the last few centuries. This has significant implications for reading and systematically understanding Tibetan art history and visual culture. Style, hardly divorced from meaning, *is* content.

The Karma Gardri-style paintings that have made the longest journey within the Tibetan Buddhist cultural realm—that I have located—are found in a small shrine built at the summer grazing camp, or *doksa* ('brog sa), at Shadé (Sha ded) in Zangskar. The villagers there use the *doksa* for male sheep and goats.<sup>429</sup> Shadé has been described as "the most remote, the highest, and nearly the smallest of Zangskar villages, standing at 4,160 meters on a minor tributary of one of the headwaters of the Lungnak River."<sup>430</sup> If the village itself is so obscure, how





much more so a *doksa* used only in the summer! This site is called Tantak (Dran drag), and the shrine where the paintings are now kept is a single-room *lhakhang*, with a few adjacent rooms used occasionally by monks deputed from its mother monastery, Phuktal (Phug dar), a day's walk away. However, both years I visited the Tantak shrine, no monks were present and local villagers from Shadé living near the shrine in summer rooms (not tents) had the keys. When I tried to visit the Shadé shrine in 2010, I was told that it is now closed: all its books, paintings, and statues had been transferred to Tantak. Thus it is possible that the paintings now in Tantak originally belonged to Shadé.

The first painting from the Tantak shrine depicts Vajrasattva, the larger central figure directly below a white *chörten* encircled by a keyhole-shaped nimbus rimmed in pink (Figs. 9.1 and 9.1, detail). Directly above is a white *chörten*, Padmapāṇi is at bottom center, on his right Mañjuśrī, and on his left Vajrapāṇi in peaceful form. Buddha Śākyamuni sits at Vajrasattva's right side, and Sita (white) Tārā (sGrol dkar) on his left. On either side of the *chörten* two monks hold books. They wear red hats that resemble those of Drukpa Kagyu ('Drug pa bKa' brgyud) and Dri-gung Kagyu ('Bri gung) hierarchs. The one on the proper right has a mustache.



No inscriptions were observed on front or back of the painting. It has suffered from water damage, revealing the lighter tonality of the original painting.

The features most closely resembling the Karma Gardri style include: the relative openness of the composition, the use of clouds as framing and connecting devices, the trees with cone-shaped branches placed in clusters of three (we will encounter the same device in the Tārā painting C9; Figs. 9.27 and 9.27a), the schematic ridgelike treatment of the clouds at the very top (alternating dark and light), and most distinctively, the background. The cloth is very thinly painted; there is a smooth gradient between the plain light green

FIG. 9.1 (above left)  
Tantak Vajrasattva

FIG. 9.1, detail (above)  
Tantak Vajrasattva

toward the bottom and the pale blue at the top. This is not a particularly fine painting, but its features betray its origins well outside of Zangskar.

The other painting is quite small and in similarly poor condition (Figs. 9.2 and 9.2a, detail). Not only is there a horizontal crease across the main figure's face, but a water stain encircles his eye, which is rather unsettling. The main figure is Padmasambhava, the





FIG. 9.2 (above)  
Tantak Padmasambhava

FIG. 9.2A, detail (above right)

eighth-century figure with a legendary reputation who is credited with overcoming local demonic resistance to transplanting Buddhism to Tibet. He wears the kind of hat typically worn by important Nyingmapa teachers, though since Padmasambhava is revered by all the lineages, this painting need not be attributed to the Nyingmapas.

Above the main figure is a small bodhisattva or a *siddha* (Fig. 9.2a, detail). One leg is pendant and he makes the *dāna* gesture of giving. His hair is in a high chignon, and he wears large round earrings, a small crown, an orange skirt over a striped *dhōti*, and a long green scarf with an antelope skin draped over the left shoulder. This may be Padmapāṇi Avalokiteśvara, of whom Padmasambhava is considered a body-emanation. One of the well-known sets of paintings associated with Situ Panchen includes an eighteenth-century painting (now in the Rubin Museum of Art) depicting a seated Avalokiteśvara, naked to the waist but for a green scarf and an antelope skin, with a high chignon, one leg up and one leg pendant.<sup>431</sup> However, Situ's Avalokiteśvara holds



the stem of a white lotus, as one would expect of Padmapāṇi. Alternatively, this figure in the Tantak painting may be the Siddha Rolpa (Sanskrit: Lalita) who appears above the Karmapa in a nineteenth-century Karma Gardri painting now in the Musée Guimet.<sup>432</sup>

The nimbus is a variant of the elaborate depictions of light radiating from the Buddha in the Situ Panchen-designed set of “The Hundred Previous Lives of the Buddha.”<sup>433</sup> There the lightrays alternate between thinner and thicker lines against a blue background. Behind Padmasambhava, there are denser wavy lines against a light green background, even closer to that found frequently in Amdo Rebgong painting today.<sup>434</sup> Another device occurring here and frequently met with in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century paintings from Kham is the sprouting of the lotus stem and leaves supporting Padmasambhava's lotus seat emerging from an expanse of

blue, as if from a lake ringed by lightly washed green hills. Modified versions appear in five of the mid-nineteenth-century Tārā paintings discussed below that are associated with the Fourteenth Karmapa (A1, B4, C8, C10, and C11; Figs. 9.19, 9.22, 9.26, 9.28, and 9.29).

Other Karma Gardri painting features are the restrained sparse composition and the thin atmospheric background. The gradient moves up the cloth from pale green to plain and then a darker solid color at the very top; there the sun and the moon appear on either side of Avalokiteśvara (or Lalita).

This painting is also of interest because of the inscription on the back (Fig. 9.2b, inscriptions on reverse). Unfortunately, it does not identify the artist, the donor, or intended recipient, nor the location of its creation. Besides the consecratory syllables (*om ah hūm*), there are three lines in Laṅṭsa or Rañjanā script and three lines of Tibetan cursive



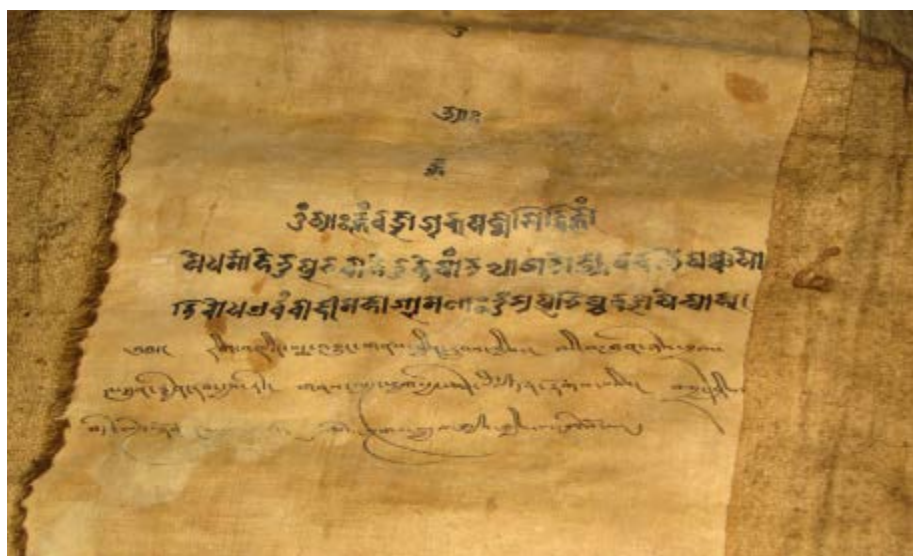


FIG. 9.2B, inscriptions on reverse

script (*dbu med*). Dan rTen-ne Martin, a leading Tibetologist whose expertise I have depended on, notes that the ornamental Indic script transcribes the Guru Rinpoche mantra followed by the frequently encountered *Ye Dharma* invocation.<sup>435</sup> Next is a prayer to Padmasambhava that freely translated is as follows:

Vidyādhara Padmasambhava,  
perform *adhiṣṭhāna* (empowerment) and free us from discord, fully developing harmony among us. Allow us to comprehend the Mahāmudrā of the natural state. Let auspicious good luck and attainments become widespread. Thus the emanated mantra is transcribed!<sup>436</sup>

The mention of Mahāmudrā might suggest a Kagyu context, being most commonly affiliated with the Karma, Drukpa, and Drigung Kagyu, but is not exclusive to that lineage. Also, the subject matter of Padmasambhava might lead one to assume an originally Nyingma context, though, as already mentioned, Padmasambhava is also revered in the other traditions. This is where the stylistic evidence for a Kham origin of the nineteenth century can be useful. There was a well-known concerted movement toward permeability of

lineage walls just at that time and place where Kagyu and Nyingma teachings intermingled. One influential example of this is the famous Rimé (Ris med) movement led by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (’Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse’i dBang po, 1820–1892) and Jamgön Kongtrul Lodro Thaye (’Jam mgon Kong sprul bLo gros mTha’ yas, 1813–1899) and other teachers in Kham, such as Patrul Rinpoche (dPal sprul Rin po che, 1808–1887), who played down sectarian differences.<sup>437</sup>

Before considering the agency by which these paintings arrived in

Zangskar, I will first add three other examples of Kham-style painting surviving in the western regions of Ladakh and Zangskar. Two of them are kept in a spectacular little shrine high on a cliff in the Markha Valley (south of the Indus in Ladakh) near Umlung (Fig. 9.3). The shrine is referred to as Tetsa or Techa.<sup>438</sup> It is tended by a single monk deputed by Hemis Monastery in Ladakh. The paintings in the old assembly hall, or *dukhang* (’du khang), are clearly Drukpa Kagyu in subject matter, as one would expect since the mother monastery was founded by Shambhunātha (i.e., sTag tshang Ras pa) in the seventeenth century. Devers and Vernier explain that subsequent to “the visit of the Drukchen Rinpoche [i.e., the Great Drukpa Lama] to the valley in June 2009, a new *dukhang* was built on top of the site that houses the books and statues of the deities that were previously in the old one.”<sup>439</sup> Indeed, I saw and photographed several paintings in the new *dukhang*, including two that

FIG. 9.3  
Tetsa Shrine, Markha Valley







FIG. 9.4  
Tetsa Vajrasattva

may be from Bhutan (a Guru Dragpo Marchen [Vajrakīla], and a very impressive large Sarvavid Vairocana painting). An additional two also appear to be in the Karma Kagyu style.

The first is a small painting of Vajrasattva mounted in Indian cotton (Fig. 9.4). This is a replacement mounting; there is an earlier row of needle-holes visible at the upper right. Above these holes, the pigment is much brighter, giving some indication that this remounting took place recently. Otherwise the painting has been subject

to humidity or water, cracking, and staining. The orange and pink pigments are still bright, but the white pigment with red lines has mostly flaked away to reveal the medium gray ink underdrawing. As a result, the figure itself has a tentative look, diminishing whatever visual impact it might once have had. This time Vajrasattva appears alone. He hovers against a background of a medium blue fading into an unpainted area at the middle. Below are pale green rocks and a pool of light blue water. A lotus bearing him arises from the water. In that way the painting resembles the Tantak Padmasambhava. On either side of the lotus are *cintāmaṇi* pearls, a

conch, and two elephant tusks, precious offerings to Vajrasattva. He is an important deity in Esoteric Buddhist practice and is not merely confined to purification rituals, the context in which he is most often associated today.

The second Tetsa painting is quite extraordinary (Figs. 9.5–9.5c). Although also having suffered severe water streaking, it is the finest so far introduced. It depicts a monk with heavy jowls and neck sitting and resting his arm upon a gnarled pine tree. (I did not notice any inscriptions.) His extended right hand holds a long Tibetan book to bless two bowing monk-disciples; he touches the top of their heads with the text, in the traditional Tibetan way (Fig. 9.5, main figure). This is a standard behavioral response,<sup>440</sup> yet it is rare to see it shown in almost a cavalier way.<sup>441</sup> To my eye, the gesture succeeds in giving the monk character and a sense of humor. His face is very well painted, with fine details around the eyes and the visible corner of the mouth turned up in a smile (Fig. 9.5a, detail of main figure). The gold detailing of the hat and robe is intricate and precise; tiny conches, wheels, gems, and an *apsaras* pouring from a vase are all visible on the pointed, folded Drukpa hat. His halo is another *tour de force* of painting, asserting its presence notwithstanding its transparency. Another monk, bare-chested but like the main figure wearing a yogi's strap across the chest, floats on a cloud outlined in blue; Jackson has identified this style of clouds as distinctive to the Karma Gardri in chapter 5 (Fig. 9.5, upper left). The monk carries a long-life vase in his lap. Below him, two exotic blue birds—one with a flowering branch in its mouth—fly across the unpainted background in line with the teacher's hat. Three more birds are perched in the tree branches behind the main figure. In the middle distance, above and behind the two monks receiving the book blessing, a solitary monk wearing a red outer





robe sits in meditative absorption inside a cave.

Below the main figure, seated on the other side of the tree, there appears to be a senior disciple (Fig. 9.5b, detail depicting tree, tigers, and disciple). Although wearing monastic robes, he has long hair piled on his head and a *kapāla* skull bowl at his side. This is a Drukpa yogin; his unshaved face and mustache are handled with the right

shades of ink to convey his unorthodoxy, confirmed by the earring. He too has a pleasing, thoughtful air about him. Behind him a lay attendant erects the yogi's *khatvāṅga* staff. The yogin stares at a pair of tigers at the base of the tree-trunk. One tiger snoozes with a big grin, the other stares back at the yogin with its jaws open as if either growling or purring. The long black stripes against the tawny fur contrast wonderfully and

FIG. 9.5, main figure (top left)  
Tetsa Drukpa Lineage Painting  
30 x 17 in. (76.2 x 43.2 cm)

FIG. 9.5A, detail of main figure (above left)

FIG. 9.5B, detail depicting tree, tigers and disciple (top right)

FIG. 9.5C, detail depicting Tsering Ma (above right)



parallel the dark knots against the rich brown tree trunk. Below the two tigers, in the lower left, Tsering Ma, the Auspicious Lady of Long-life, smiles benevolently, riding a green-maned lion (Fig. 9.5c, detail depicting Tsering Ma).

Besides the artist's being able to invest character into each of the figures through facial expression and behavior (including the lion and the tigers), the success of the painting depends on two factors: the quality of the stone-ground pigments and the depiction of the landscape. The orange, red, brown, and pink shades are still bright in lustre. The artist also had an innovative range of colors at his or her disposal. Note the unusual shade of gray-green worn by the attendant with the *khatvanga*, the medium green of the wicker stool below the main figure's flexed plump toes, and the steel blue of the birds. But what stands out is the undiluted purity of the blue-and-green of the landscape. This is made from dense unmixed stone-ground azurite (the blue) and malachite (the green). The setting contains elements of Chinese landscape painting. The tree and the use of blue-and-green recall the Ming-dynasty landscapes with the Sixteen Arhats that were sent to Tibet in the fifteenth century.<sup>442</sup> It is also reminiscent of Chinese figure painting against a plain background. Or so at first it appears; actually there are long horizontally stratified clouds directly below the pair of flying birds (Fig. 9.5).

This painting relates to one in the Rubin Museum of Art that Jackson has insightfully assigned to the period of the early, pre-Situ Panchen Karma Gardri style of the seventeenth century<sup>443</sup> (Fig. 9.6). The similarities between the two paintings are clear: the gnarled and knotted tree, the modulated outlining, the unpainted sky, the character in the face (there the main figure is endowed with fierce determination), the asymmetrical treatment of the mouth, and the fine gold patterning on the cloth. There are also



subtle but significant differences: the treatment of the halo is opaque in the Rubin Museum painting, the brushwork handled with restraint and tightness by the latter artist, the contained billows of foliage compared with the looser, somewhat scratchy edges in the Tetsa foliage and flora along the horizon. Perhaps most significant is the relative scale of major and minor figures. In

FIG. 9.6  
Gomchung Sherab Changchub  
Tibet; 17th century  
Ground mineral pigment on cotton  
31 ¾ x 20 in. (80.6 x 50.8 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.269 (HAR 418)





FIG. 9.7

Tsomori Lake with Korzok village and monastery at the foot of the mountain

the Rubin Museum painting, the minor figures are mostly of the same size, are evenly distributed, and are relatively smaller in scale in relation to the main figure, Gomchung Sherab Changchub (sGom chung Shes rab Byang chub, 1130–1173), a previous incarnation of the Situ incarnation. The Tetsa painting varies their size and places the figures asymmetrically. One overall tendency in the eighteenth century—certainly in paintings associated with Situ Panchen—is to miniaturize the minor figures into an almost doll-like size. The landscape background is also smoothed and simplified; the main figures have a mannered preciousness rather than a hearty personality.<sup>444</sup> Just the opposite is true of paintings attributed to the late sixteenth century done for Karma Kagyu patrons in the Menri or early Gardri style: the minor figures are larger, the landscapes more complex like their Chinese models.<sup>445</sup> Stylistic development is rarely along a single spectrum bracketed between two poles, but if it were, one might be tempted to date the Tetsa lineage painting slightly earlier in the seventeenth century than the Rubin Museum painting for all of these reasons. The appropriation of the Chinese

elements of the landscape was still fresh and novel, not having been abstracted into the soft atmospheric minimalism one sees in the nineteenth-century Karma Gardri paintings, such as the Vajrasattva and Padmasambhava paintings from Tetsa and Tantak.

A fifth Kham-style painting preserved in Ladakh appears in the monastery at Korzok. Korzok is located at the northern end of the large freshwater lake Tsomoriri in southeastern Ladakh, near both Spiti to the south and Tibet to the east (Fig. 9.7). It is now one of the headquarters and the winter habitation for Tibetan nomad herders who used to cross the border between Ladakh and Ngari Province in the Rupshu (previously, Ru shod, also Ru thog) area, also referred to in Ladakh contexts as Changthang.<sup>446</sup> Founded in the nineteenth century, this monastery contains a painting of three *mahāsiddhas*: Ghaṇṭāpa and his consort at top left, Padmavajra at top right, and Kukkuripa with a white dog, later revealed to be a *dākinī* (Fig. 9.8). These are three *mahāsiddhas* derived from a set of Eight Great Siddhas originally designed and painted by Situ Panchen in 1725–26. They were used as a gift to an influential ruler when Situ Panchen

needed permission to build and move to a new monastery nearby.<sup>447</sup> Altogether a nine-painting set, with each of the eight *siddhas* painted separately, they were displayed on either side of a central Padmasambhava (or Vajradhara) painting. However, the *siddhas* from this textually documented (but presumably lost) set were also assembled into composite images, in three- or five-painting sets, or in a single painting. These original compositions of Situ Panchen remained models used and reused without any stigma of “copying” into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly in Kham. Three versions of the composition are in the collection of the Rubin Museum of Art as illustrated and discussed in chapter 2. They differ from each other not in the arrangement of the *siddhas* but in minor details concerning the landscape, the clouds, and the precise placement of the *siddha* motif on the rectangular space.<sup>448</sup> The one closest to the Korzok painting is at first glance nearly identical (Fig. 9.9): they share the same model down to the patterns of the scarves, the clouds, and the sharp-edged cusps on the rocks. Nevertheless, the blue water at the bottom of the Rubin painting is missing in the Korzok version and there are variations in coloring. As with other nineteenth-century paintings from Kham, the pale green is lightened at the bottom and yields to an unpainted expanse above the horizon, with a gradual light-to-dark tint of blue at the upper sky. Rocks are in the formulaic blue-and-green style with multicolored sets of clouds scattered high and low.

This Korzok painting—like the others in monastic and shrine collections in Ladakh and Zangskar we have examined—has stains and cracks along folds. Such a painting is not always hanging in the *dukhang* of the monastery





FIG. 9.8 (above left)  
Ghaṇṭāpa, Padmavajra, and Kukkuripa,  
Korzok monastery



FIG. 9.9 (above right)  
Ghaṇṭāpa, Padmavajra, and Kukkuripa  
Eastern Tibet; 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Karma (Kagyü) Lineage  
Ground mineral pigment on cotton  
11 x 11 ¾ in. (27.9 x 29.8 cm)  
Rubin Museum of Art  
C2006.66.434 (HAR889)

but exhibited only during festivals or special occasions, resulting in damage from frequent rolling and unrolling. Art historically, we can be sure that it has not been in-painted, its colors not freshened or brightened. Only the stains have been added. There is no evidence that the cloth mounting has been replaced, though the upper dust cover is certainly relatively new. Once again, no inscriptions were discovered on the painting.

The lack of inscriptions naming historical personages prevents us from knowing precisely how the two Vajrasattvas, the Padmasambhava, the Drukpa Kagyu lineage, and the *siddha* paintings were brought to Ladakh and Zangskar. While one cannot exclude the possibility that the paintings were done in Ladakh, Zangskar, or some other location, we can be certain they were done by artists familiar with painting conventions current in Kham—in the nineteenth century for most of them, and in the seventeenth century for the Drukpa Lama painting. Since we know of no artistic atelier in Ladakh or Zangskar specializing in the Karma Gardri style, it is probably safe to assume, by way of Occam's razor, that they were painted in Kham, or possibly in Karma Kagyu contexts such as Tshurphu in central Tibet. Beyond that,

different scenarios can be contemplated for their arrival in Ladakh and Zangskar. It is certainly within the realm of the possible that they were commissioned of artists working in the Karma Gardri styles in Kham or elsewhere by traveling Ladakhi or Zangskari patrons who subsequently returned home with them. Since the Padmasambhava and the Tetsa Vajrasattva are not of particularly distinguished quality and focus on a single deity—both potential *yidams*—they might instead reflect the kind of painting brought by a solitary religious practitioner for personal devotions or meditation support. Through their traditions of “mendicant asceticism and solitary meditation,” Drukpa practitioners “gained the well-deserved reputation in Tibet as that land’s long-distance religious travelers and pilgrims par excellence.”<sup>449</sup> Writing in 1940 after a series of expeditions to both sides of the



western Tibetan borders, Tucci observed that in the early seventeenth century,

there was a regular intercourse between Jalandhar and Tibet as there is even now. There is hardly any doubt that this was chiefly due to the travels of Tibetan pilgrims of the rDsogs c'en [i.e. Nyingmapa] and specially of the bKa' brgyud pa sects who used to visit the sacred places of Buddhist tradition. After rGod tshang pa [1189–1258] their number must have considerably increased: to-day there is a regular intercourse along the routes and the tracks of western Tibet.<sup>450</sup>

Given the series of “Khampa migration and settlement into other parts of far western Tibet”<sup>451</sup> during the latter half of the nineteenth century, paintings may have been brought by laymen as well, gradually donated to the local shrines—even one such as Tantak, which is nominally overseen by the Gelukpa monastery of Phuktal. A notable feature of this nineteenth-century efflorescence of pilgrimage to far-western Tibet and the neighboring regions of Kashmir and India was the recognition and rather arbitrary designation of parts of Himachal Pradesh (including Mandi and Riwalas) and the Punjab (including Amritsar and Lahore) to be regions associated with the life of the “International Buddha,” Padmasambhava.<sup>452</sup> This resulted in a flow of mendicants, including many from Tibet’s eastern reaches, across Ngari into Spiti, other regions of Himachal Pradesh, and the Punjab. Since Zangskar and Ladakh were the westernmost outposts of Tibetan Buddhism, it would not be surprising that some of the pilgrims went or returned by way of these villages and monasteries.

Most of the pilgrims traveling between Kham and Ladakh and Zangskar remain nameless. Any one of them could have brought the Vajrasattva and

Padmasambhava paintings. However there were a number of prominent Drukpa teachers, mainly from central Tibet or Bhutan, who traveled in or near these regions, along with political events and institutional ties that fostered such connections. Among the most prominent events, one of the earliest Drukpa teachers to stay at Kailash and to go even farther west is Go Tshangpa (rGod Tshang pa), mentioned by Tucci above. Tucci asserts that Go Tshangpa went as far as Jalandhara via Spiti and Lahaul, where “imprints” of his hands or feet are still pointed out.<sup>453</sup> Locally, it is believed that he came to Ladakh; above Hemis Monastery there is still a shrine devoted to and named after this early pilgrim-meditator.<sup>454</sup> The Drukpa presence at Kailash in western Tibet began in the early thirteenth century and “lasted without interruption ever since.”<sup>455</sup> Go Tshangpa’s follower, Orgyanpa Rinchen Pal (O rgyan pa Rin chen dpal, 1230–1309), also reached Jalandhara, and returned via Kangra, Lahaul, and Ladakh.<sup>456</sup> Tagtshang Repa (sTag tshang Ras pa), also known as Ogyan Ngawang Gyatso (O rgyan Ngag dbang rGya mtsho, 1574–1651) strengthened the Drukpa institutional ties with the Ladakhi kings through his trip to Ladakh possibly in 1614 (when he also visited Lahaul and Zangskar both on his way and when returning) and during his long stay in Ladakh beginning in 1622.<sup>457</sup> However, Tagtshang Repa was not from Kham, but from central Tibet. Still, under his influence, the Ladakhi king Sengge Namgyal (Seng ge rNam rgyal) sent numerous missions to the Drukchen incarnation between 1626 and 1641, bringing gifts back and forth between the Drukpa centers of central Tibet and Ladakh.<sup>458</sup> It was also during this period of the first half of the seventeenth century when Hemis Monastery itself was founded. Eventually these relations were complicated by the establishment of a branch of the Drukpa in

Bhutan. Conflict arose when the Ladakhi kings supported the Bhutanese Drukpa against the Fifth Dalai Lama, culminating in the war of 1679–84.<sup>459</sup> A certain Druwang Rinpoche (Grub dbang Rin po che), a follower of the Fifth Drukchen (dPag bsam dBang po, 1593–1641), was sent to Ladakh at the bequest of the Ganden Phodrang (Geluk) government in 1655 in an attempt to smooth relations between the Lhasa and Leh governments.<sup>460</sup> Another mission was sent soon after 1661.<sup>461</sup> The tensions between the Bhutanese Drukpas and Lhasa broke into hostilities in 1676 but were resolved by 1678. The Lhasa-Leh war, precipitated by the Ladakh Namgyal kings supporting the Bhutanese against Lhasa, started in late 1679. The Sixth Drukchen, Mipham Wangpo (Mi pham dBang po, 1641–1717, born in southeastern Tibet), traveled to Ladakh around 1684 in order to convince the Namgyal king to return to the Buddhist fold after his (forced?) conversion to Islam.<sup>462</sup> The Seventh Drukchen, Kagyu Trinlé Shinta (dKa’ brgyud ’Phrin las Shin rta, 1718–1766) visited Ladakh around 1747 or 1748.<sup>463</sup> The Eighth Drukchen Kunzig Chokyi Nangwa (Kun gzigs Chos kyi sNang wa, 1768–1822) visited between 1801 and 1802, unfortunately during a smallpox epidemic; the king died, though the Drukchen survived.<sup>464</sup>

Among the notable Bhutanese Drukpa visitors to Ladakh is Jamgön Ngawang Gyaltsen (Byams mgon Ngag dbang rGyal mtshan, 1647–1732). He was a celebrated guest of the kings of Ladakh between 1706 and 1712.<sup>465</sup> Later in the same century, a distinguished lama from a Nyingma monastery (Ka’ thog) in the Derge region of Kham, Kathog Rigzin Tsewang Norbu (Ka’ thog Rig ’dzin Tshe dbang Nor bu, 1698–1755), was sent to Ladakh in 1752 to 1753 by the Seventh Dalai Lama to mediate a dispute within the Namgyal royal family. The rift was splitting Ladakh into two and disrupting trade and tribute.





FIG. 9.10 (above left)  
Hand-colored photograph of the Kham yogi  
Drubwang Shakya Shri (grub dbang sha kya  
shri; 1853–1919)  
Bardan Gompa, Zangskar



FIG. 9.11 (above right)  
Kankani Chörten, Ichar village, Zangskar

These tensions had ramifications also in Spiti.<sup>466</sup> The Kathog succeeded in producing a treaty after talks conducted at the Dechen Namgyal Monastery at Hanle (Vam le), east of the large lake Tsomoriri. Founded by Tagtsang Repa in 1624, Hanle was the site where the Ladakhi king Sengge Namgyal died in 1642 while returning from an expedition to Tsang against “raiding Mongol clans and Guge refugees,” and where Tsetan Namgyal (Tshe brtan rNam rgyal) was enthroned in 1782.<sup>467</sup>

Another high-profile Drukpa Kagyu pilgrim from Kham was Lama Karma Tenzin (sKarma bsTan ’dzin) of

Dzonkhul Gompa (rDzong khul dGon pa) in Zangskar.<sup>468</sup> He was from Derge and was “attracted by the fame of [the Drukpa yogi, abbot and painter] bZhad pa [rDo rje, d. 1816], whom he succeeded as abbot at Dzonkhul (rDzong Khul) after the death of bZhad pa.”<sup>469</sup> Not long after his arrival, in 1814, the Fifth Dechen Chokor Rinpoche Yongzin Yeshe Drubpa (bDe chen Chos ’khor Yongs ’dzin Ye shes grub pa, 1781–1845), a Drukpa teacher from central Tibet arrived in Ladakh for a three-year stay.<sup>470</sup> Across the Omasi La, south of Dzonkhul, in the region known as Paldar, a mother and a child from Kham settled in the twentieth century, while they and several other locals became disciples of a Nyingma master from the first half of the twentieth century known as the Kham Lama, since he was originally from Lithang (Li thang) in Kham.<sup>471</sup> Parenthetically, an old, hand-colored photograph of the Kham yogi Drubwang Togden Shakya Shri (Grub dbang Rtogs

Idan Sha kya Shri, 1853–1919) is kept on the altar at Bardan Gompa in Zangskar (Fig. 9.10), so the fame of Drukpa yogis traveled in both directions.<sup>472</sup> As David Jackson discusses in chapter 7, the Ladakhi painter Ridzon Setrül Losang Tshultrim Chöphel (1864–1927) of the Geluk monastery of Ridzong went to southwestern Kham for study. However, there is still no evidence to support the belief that any of these particular travelers were in any way involved in bringing the paintings discussed to Ladakh or Zangskar. They do, however, provide necessary examples from different periods of the types of contacts between Kham and the western regions by which such paintings are likely to have been conveyed.

There is one final admittedly enigmatic piece of visual evidence worth considering. It does not demonstrate the presence of Kham artistic styles in Ladakh and Zangskar but rather documents contacts with preeminent





Karma Kagyu *tulkus* as early as the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. It is found in the murals inside the Kankani Chörten at the village of Ichar (Fig. 9.11).<sup>473</sup> On the upper interior murals, there are two smaller images of Dusum Khyenpa (Dus gsum mKhyen pa, 1110–1193), the First Karmapa (Figs. 9.12 and 9.13), and one large portrait of a red-hat lama with the Karma Kagyu stem lineage ending with Dusum Khyenpa above him (Fig. 9.14). In both depictions of the Karmapa wearing the black hat (Figs. 9.12 and 9.13), he makes the gesture of turning the wheel of the teaching, *dharmacakra mudra*, a conventional attribute of Dusum Khyenpa and the basis for his identification here. The larger portrait of the teacher wearing a red hat (Fig. 9.14) appears on a wall to the proper right of Ratnasambhava Tathāgata, with

four-armed Avalokiteśvara on the latter's left. All three (i.e., the red-hat teacher, Ratnasambhava, and Avalokiteśvara) are nearly the same size and are surrounded by hosts of smaller deities, or retinue. The red-hat monk, the most prominent teacher featured in the Ichar murals with the Karmapa above his left shoulder, is most likely one of the first Shamars, the so-called Red Hat Karmapas, a lineage that began in the late thirteenth century.<sup>474</sup>

Based on style, these murals date to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. I am not aware of a member of one of the Red Hat Karma Kagyu lineages visiting Ngari around that time; moreover, unlike the Drigung and Drukpa Kagyu lineages, which are well-attested throughout Ladakh and Zangskar, Karma Kagyu shrines are rare there. Still, the presence of the portraits of black- and

FIG. 9.12 (top left)  
Padmasambhava and Dusum Khyenpa  
Mural within Ichar Kankani Chörten, Ichar  
village, Zangskar; ca. late 14th–early 15th  
century

FIG. 9.13 (above left)  
Dusum Khyenpa  
Mural within Ichar Kankani Chörten, Ichar  
village, Zangskar; ca. late 14th–early 15th  
century

FIG. 9.14 (above right)  
Shamar Lama  
Mural within Ichar Kankani Chörten, Ichar  
village, Zangskar; ca. late 14th–early 15th  
century



red-hat Karmapas deep in Zangskar must represent some direct contact, familiarity with, and even reverence for their lineage on the part of religious devotees (no later than the fifteenth century) in Zangskar.<sup>475</sup> In the early eighteenth century, an otherwise unknown Ladakhi prince is recorded in the biography of the Eighth Shamar (dPal chen Chos kyi Don grub, 1695–1732) as having met the Shamar and Situ Panchen during 1724 in the Manasarovar region of western Tibet while traveling to Kailash.<sup>476</sup> The importance of Situ Panchen for the development of the Karma Gardri style is well established and has been repeatedly mentioned above.<sup>477</sup> Thirty-eight years later, in 1762, Situ Panchen met the Ladakhi queen mother Nyila Wangmo (Nyi zla dBang mo), probably in Lhasa in 1764 to congratulate the Eighth Dalai Lama on his accession.<sup>478</sup> There Situ Panchen met two brothers, Ladakhi princelings, one of whom was probably also the distinguished head of Hemis Monastery.<sup>479</sup> As we will see next, this contact with the chief personalities of the Karma Kagyu was revived in the nineteenth century. Already we have demonstrated that many opportunities arose in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for south-eastern Tibetan paintings to have reached the shrines of Ladakh and Zangskar.

On July 14, 2010, on the seventeenth day of a forty-two day trek through Ladakh and Zangskar, I happened to arrive at the previously described (Fig. 9.17) Korzok Monastery on the eve of its annual masked dance festival, Korzok Gustor (Fig. 9.15). During the uncostumed run-through (Fig. 9.16), I entered the *dukhang* and was surprised to find that the monks had displayed a number of their artistic and religious treasures, including a group of twelve *thangkas* that were in the Karma Gardri style (Fig. 9.17). (I had been to Korzok in 2002 and had not seen these paintings.)



Eleven White Tārās hung on either side of a Karmapa portrait (Figs. 9.19–9.29). A monk from Korzok informed me that this was a self-portrait of the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje (Fig. 9.18) and that he had painted it along with the Tārās. He also said that ten more Tārā paintings (making up a set of Twenty-one Tārās) were in a related Drukpa monastery closer to the border of Tibet, and thus restricted for foreigners. The monastery in question may be Hanle, the Drukpa monastery mentioned above, too near the border of Chinese-controlled Tibet to presently allow foreigners

FIG. 9.15 (top)  
Korzok Monastery during Korzok Gustor  
July 15, 2010

FIG. 9.16 (above)  
Monk in rehearsal for Korzok Gustor  
July 14, 2010  
Photograph by Joel Reed





FIG. 9.17  
Interior view of Korzok Dukhang with  
Karmapa paintings displayed  
July 15, 2010

access, or Chumur, a sister monastery to Korzok, similarly off limits to foreigners. Three of the hanging paintings had inscriptions on the backs, which were also uncovered. On the day of the actual dance, the dust covers had been removed with only the red rolling ribbons hanging in front of the paintings. These I carefully set aside while photographing and then equally delicately put them back. Thus on the afternoon of one day and the morning of the next, I was able to study and photograph them within the *dukhang*, not ideal conditions since because of the festival, there were many people coming through the shrine and performers getting in and out of robes and masks with assistants. I did not feel comfortable measuring each painting with a tape measure and made only rough estimates of the sizes. Nonetheless, it was only because of the festive atmosphere, with the treasures displayed and everyone happy and involved, that these paintings became accessible. When I returned on July 28, 2011 (seventeenth day of a thirty-seven day trek), the date happened to coincide with the visit of the current Drukchen Rinpoche (the Twelfth Gyalwang Drukpa Jigme Pema Wangchen [rGyal dbang 'Brug pa 'Jigs med Pad ma dBang chen, b.

1963]). The eleven Tārā paintings were once again displayed (in a different configuration among other paintings), but not including the Karmapa portrait. Other paintings that had not been shown the year before, including a different Karma Gardri portrait discussed below, were also hanging near the throne of Drukchen Rinpoche. Between the two opportunities for study and photography under fieldwork conditions, the photographs revealed enough to make some preliminary observations about the paintings.

I have not been able to confirm the information provided by the helpful monk—that the rest of the set is in an inaccessible monastery (to me)—so the following will focus on the twelve paintings in Korzok Monastery. I would also point out that *all* of the Korzok Tārās are White Tārās, while known sets of the Twenty-one Tārās are made up of different forms of Tārā; they do not include White Tārā in this standard form: two-armed, legs in full lotus position (*padmāsana*), seven eyes (on the palms and soles and above the normal pair), proper left hand holding the stem of a white utpala-lotus, the right extended beyond the knee in the gesture of giving or *dāna*, the *pāramitā* of generosity.

The monk's information that the paintings were done by the Karmapa can be partially confirmed in the case of the three paintings with inscriptions. They were not by the Ninth Karmapa, but rather by the Fourteenth Karmapa Thekchok Dorje (Theg mchog rDo rje, 1798–1868).<sup>480</sup> This is based on the inscriptions found on the back of two of the Tārā paintings and the portrait of a Karmapa. Its iconography suggests this painting does indeed depict the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje (dBang phyug rDo rje, 1556–1601/1603) (Figs. 9.18 and 9.30). While not all depictions of the Ninth Karmapa show him in teaching gesture, *vitarka mudrā*, and holding a long-life vase in his right and left hands respectively, this appears to be one of the standard ways of depicting him, and no other Karmapa is consistently portrayed with these characteristics.<sup>481</sup> Interestingly, in two different modern paintings of the Ninth Karmapa based on the same template, the deity above his right shoulder is White Tārā, the same deity surrounding him at Korzok (Fig. 9.17).

The beginning of the first line of the inscription on the Karmapa portrait, once again in cursive “headless” script, (*dbu med*) is, unfortunately, covered by a patch (Fig. 9.30a, inscription). Karsha Lonpo and Dan Martin have kindly transcribed it as follows:

xxx xxx xx rje 'i dbang phyug nyar  
(nyid? nyer?) la yang / 'di nas  
byang chub  
snying po 'i bar / rjes 'dzin byin  
gyis rlob pa dang / don gnyis  
'grub par mdzad du gsol / ces  
pa 'ang karma ka yâ na  
pa ra ma badzra syas so /





FIG. 9.18  
Portrait of Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje  
Fourteenth Karmapa Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.19  
Portrait of Tārā No. A1  
Fourteenth Karmapa Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.20  
Portrait of Tārā No. A2  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.24  
Portrait of Tārā No. B6  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.25  
Portrait of Tārā No. B7  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.26  
Portrait of Tārā No. C8  
Fourteenth Karmapa Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century





FIG. 9.21  
Portrait of Tārā No. A3  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.22  
Portrait of Tārā No. B4  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.23  
Portrait of Tārā No. B5  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.27  
Portrait of Tārā No. C9  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.28  
Portrait of Tārā No. C10  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.29  
Portrait of Tārā No. C11  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



A rough translation might be:

... [rdo?] rje [or Lord, Master]

Wangchuk Karmapa . . . /

From now until we attain enlightenment /

Empowering through *adhiṣṭhāna* disciples, then /

May all benefits and accomplishments be done /

This [done by] Karmapa Yāna Pārama Vajra (= Sanskrit equivalent of Theg mchog rDo rje).

Because the crucial first line that might have identified this figure is obstructed, we can only note that Wangchuk is part of the Karmapa's name. If we can reconstruct the previous word as Dorje, it is odd that this part of the name would come before the Wangchuk. Less tentative, according to Dan Martin, is the last line, a Sanskrit transcription of the Fourteenth Karmapa's name, an erudite literary device fitting what we know of him. Jamgön Kongtrul, the Rimé master mentioned earlier, reports that in 1836 to 1837, "Gyalwang Karmapa Thekchok Dorje moved his monastic encampment to the eastern Tibetan provinces and settled at Karma Gön Monastery. A letter came from Karmapa to Situ Rinpoché requiring Situ to send me to instruct Karmapa in those aspects of Sanskrit grammar which he wished to study."<sup>482</sup> In the first month of 1837 to 1838 Jamgön Kongtrul stayed with the Fourteenth Karmapa and offered him:

a comprehensive teaching and review of the Sanskrit grammar entitled *Kalapa*. He insisted that he needed further notes to explain the basic text, so I composed these as well. He spent the fourth lunar month visiting members of his family, during which time I also gave him instructions on the grammar entitled *The Discourse of Sarasvata* and the work *Poetics: The Source of Riches*, and he in

turn bestowed on me several of his calligraphy exercises.<sup>483</sup>

This first-person account not only confirms the Karmapa's interest in Sanskrit but also his handsome calligraphy, evident in all three inscriptions. Jamgön Kongtrul remained in close contact with the Karmapa through at least 1864 to 1865; they exchanged teachings, transmissions, and empowerments.<sup>484</sup> In the fifth lunar month of 1860 the Fourteenth Karmapa arrived, with a retinue of some fifty persons including Buddhist luminaries at Jamgön Kongtrul's newly constructed hermitage Tsadra in time to perform the consecration of the structure and its contents.<sup>485</sup> He attended the Black Crown ceremony performed by the Fourteenth Karmapa on numerous occasions and was assigned the task of explanations to the audience. They traveled to and from central Tibet together, the Karmapa sometimes in the company of a younger incarnation, the Ninth Drukchen Jigme Mingyur Wanggyal ('Jigs med Mi 'gyur dBang rgyal, 1823–1883). This is significant given the importance of the Drukchen for Ladakh and because Korzok is a Drukpa Monastery now under the aegis of Hemis Monastery and the Twelfth Drukchen Rinpoche.

The condition of the painting is somewhat worse than others we have examined (Fig. 9.18a, detail). Vertical and horizontal creases have resulted in paint loss. Although there is a serious rent at the Karmapa's left shoulder, the face except at the hairline has been spared. The medium-ink lines of his demeanor are still clearly visible, while traces of pink or carmine suggest the face and fingers were once lightly tinted. The triple gradient of green, plain, and blue is without any other landscape signifiers. The Chinese red-lacquer table supports a *kundikā*-water pourer, a porcelain cup and stand, and a metal-work bowl. Below the table, a careful arrangement of green, orange, red, and

blue *cintāmaṇi* spread between a conch and a piece of coral, enhances the sense of planar space and distance. This sense of space, along with the intensity of the colors against the plain ground are the hallmarks of the Karma Gardri style of the nineteenth century. We will return to the issue of style below, after first considering the eleven Tārās.

At least two of the White Tārās were painted by the Fourteenth Karmapa as demonstrated by his inscriptions on the back of paintings A1 and C8 in the group (Figs. 9.19, 9.19a, 9.26, and 9.26a). The two inscriptions (Figs. 9.19b and 9.26b) not only plainly mention him by name, but they also make explicit their dedication to the headman of Rupshu, Tsering Tashi, also the founder of Korzok Monastery. Both begin by requesting the blessings of Ārya Tārā ('Phags ma sGrol ma), both mention the chief (*dpon*) of Ladakh Ruthog or Rushod (La dwags Ru shod; i.e. Rupshu) Tsering Tashi (Tse ring bKra shis), and both indicate that they are bestowed on him by Karmapa Thekchok Dorje (Karma pa Theg mchog rDo rje) by name.<sup>486</sup> The longer inscription, on A1, appears to mention that it is a *nying thang*; that is, a one-day *thangka*, which such luminaries as Situ Panchen are known to have painted, including White Tārā.<sup>487</sup> This is one of the simplest compositions in the group, making it a plausible candidate for the *nying thang* classification.

The historical circumstances and significance of a donation of *thangkas* to a Drukpa monastery in Ladakh by a high incarnate lama based mainly in Kham must be sifted carefully because they are so unexpected and unprecedented. The twelve paintings are a tangible manifestation of a broad involvement of the Fourteenth Karmapa in the founding of Korzok Monastery and with the leading personalities involved in that founding, including the Ninth Drukchen, the Ruthog chief, Tsering Tashi, and Kunga





FIG. 9.18A, detail  
Portrait of Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje  
Fourteenth Karmapa Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century





FIG. 9.18B, inscriptions on reverse

Lote Nyingpo (Kun dga' bLo gro sNying po), understood to be the actual founder of the monastery and who considered himself a disciple of the Fourteenth Karmapa. The name of the Ruthog chief Tsering Tashi—mentioned in the inscriptions—is also identified with the establishment of Korzok by a contemporary history of Buddhism in Ladakh. Here it is noted that the monastery was named by the Fourteenth Karmapa as: “Thubten Nyinpo Drub Gyudtan Darcho Ling (Thub bstan sNying po sGrub brGyud bstan Dar chos gling)”; that the Fourteenth Karmapa sent an official letter with his seal, blessing the monastery; and that he wrote the monastic rules (bca yig) for the monastery. The Rushod Ponming (dpon ming) Tsering Tobdan (elsewhere Tsering Tashi) was also involved with the founding; and a statue of the Buddha (Sha' kya thub) consecrated by the Fourteenth Karmapa was brought from Tibet.<sup>488</sup> There appeared to be delays and inauspicious signs between the period of the founding and the completion, and so a disciple of the Fourteenth Karmapa, Kunga Lote Nyingpo, and the Rupshu (i.e.,

Ruthog, Rushog) chief asked the Ninth Gyalwang Drukpa to approve another site. It took eleven years, between 1847 and 1858, to complete the monastery.<sup>489</sup> Kunga Lote Nyingpo not only founded Korzok but is credited with establishing the nearby monastery Chumur.<sup>490</sup>

On September 19, 1846, Alexander Cunningham indirectly confirmed the existence of Korzok when he journeyed through this region and “passed Korzo Gūnpa, or monastery, inhabited by one Lama, who resides there throughout the year. He rears some barley and turnips on the banks of the Korzo rivulet close to the lake.”<sup>491</sup> This suggests that the monastery was at that time more of a hermitage, certainly not of the current scale (Fig. 9.15). By contrast, some twenty years earlier, Trebeck, normally a keen observer, never mentions it despite having walked along the west bank from the northernmost point of Tsomoriri to Kyangdam, the southernmost point, and would have had to pass the site on his way to Parang La, Spiti.<sup>492</sup> By 1931, when Walter Koelz traveled through the region on his collecting expedition, “There were about fifteen wild monks in the monastery.”<sup>493</sup> These significant notes seem to confirm that there was no shrine or monastery at all in the 1820s, and when founded by 1846, it was at

first a very modest establishment. Only after 1858 did it take on larger dimensions and require a monastic code of behavior for monks living together.

The Fourteenth Karmapa bestowed paintings on Korzok and mentions the Ruthog chief, Tsering Tashi, by name, suggesting a personal connection between the incarnate lama, his disciple Kunga Lote Nyingpo, and Tsering Tashi. It is possible that their relationship was carried out purely by correspondence. However it is clear in his biography as well as Jamgön Kongtrul's observations, that the Fourteenth Karmapa Thegchok Dorje, made extensive pilgrimages. He and a disciple traveled to Ngari Korsum (mNga ri sKor gsum), certainly going to Kailash and Manasarovar.<sup>494</sup> Perhaps he actually encountered the Korzok founders there or in central or even southeastern Tibet, though this is only speculation. In July 2011, along with the eleven Tārā paintings, another Karma Gardri painting was found in the Korzok *dukhang*, this one depicting the Fourteenth Karmapa (Figs. 9.30 and 9.30, detail). An inscription in gold against the side of the red offering table reads, in part, “Homage to Thekchog Dorje.”<sup>495</sup> It appears to be a late nineteenth-century painting. At the center above the Karmapa is Amitāyus, at the proper right corner is White Tārā, and in the top-left corner is Padmasambhava. A tiny image of the cotton-clad yogi Milarepa, representing the Kagyu lineage, is balanced atop the snow peak on the Karmapa's right. At bottom center is Bernag Chen Mahākāla, the personal protector of the Karmapas, with the four-armed protectress Dudso Dokam Wangchugma, and the treasure protector, the “Oathbound Blacksmith,” Damchen Garwa Nagpo, holding a bellows and seated on a goat with intertwined horns, in the left and right corners, respectively.

A fascinating vernacular version of the founding events at Korzok was recorded by Monisha Ahmed and is





FIG. 9.19A, detail of Tārā No. A1  
Fourteenth Karmapa Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



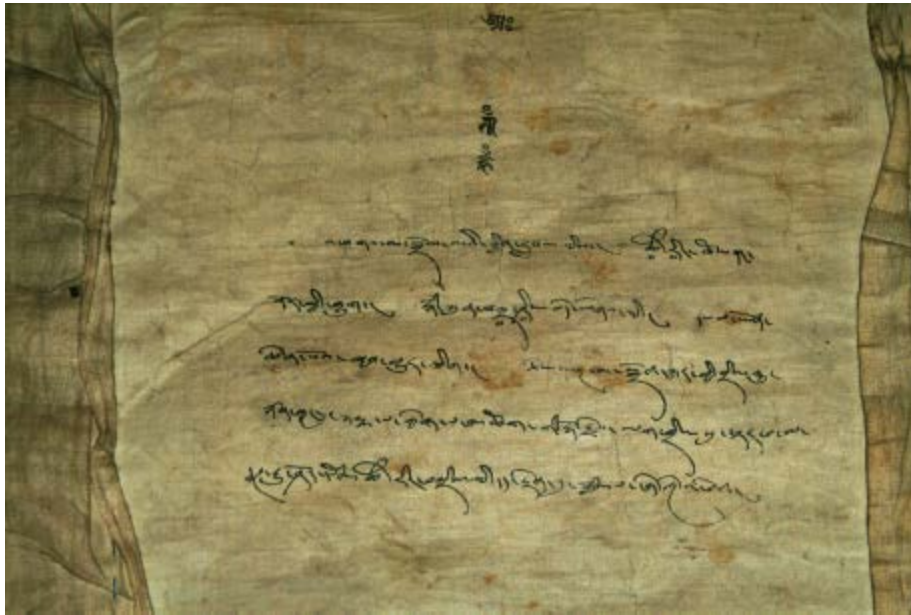


FIG. 9.19B, inscriptions on reverse

worth extended quotation and consideration. According to this source, the family members of the chief of Rupshu were nobility from Lhasa. When they arrived in Rupshu, Kunga Lote Nyingpo was living at Chumur. Since many monks had died unexpectedly at that location, Kunga Lote Nyingpo was afraid the location was inauspicious.

He went to the Rupshu Goba [headman] and said that a new monastery had to be built . . . Tsering Tashi was the new Rupshu Goba. Kunga Loto [sic] requested Tsering Tashi to go to Lhasa and consult the lamas there to decide on a site for the monastery. In Lhasa, the lamas told Tsering Tashi to conceive of building the monastery in the navel of the Goddess Dolma [i.e., Tārā]. The resulting sanctified quality of the local environment would mean a pure setting for the building and remove the misfortune that prevailed at the present site of Chumur. The lamas told Tsering Tashi that in Rupshu there is a mountain in the shape

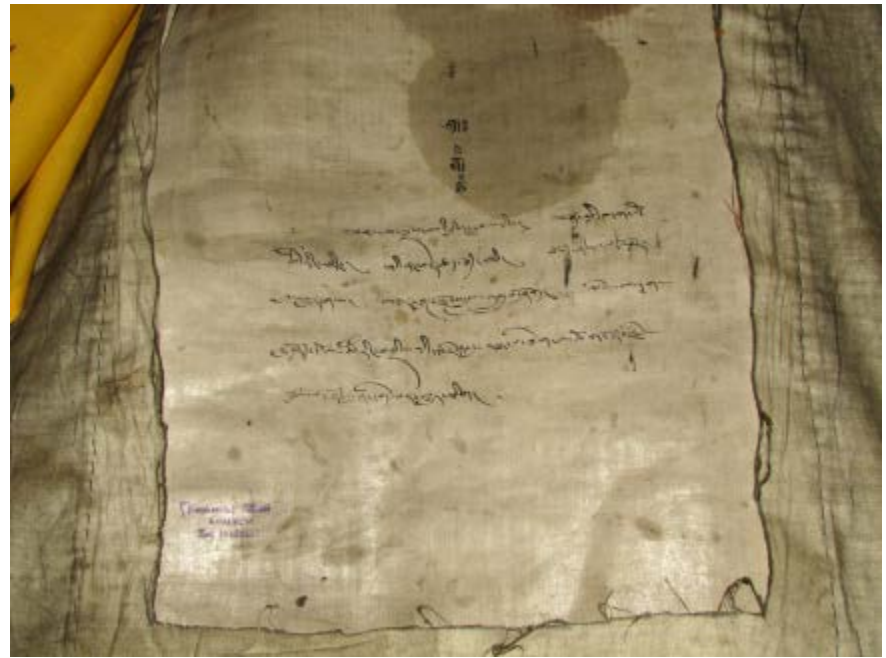
of the goddess Dolma, with her right leg outstretched and her left leg folded in. [Compare Fig. 9.7] There in the centre of her navel he was to build the monastery. Tsering Tashi replied that there are so many mountains—how would he know which one was Dolma? He was then given a statue of Shakyamuni (i.e., Buddha) and told that it would recite the prayer ‘*ma-ha mu-ni yes so ha*’ all the way till he reached the place designated for the construction of the monastery. The Goba did as the lamas said, but when the statue stopped chanting he noticed that a man had just been cremated at that site. He hesitated and wondered how he could build a monastery there. The statue of Shakyamuni replied that it was the chosen spot, and that it was a good place because the man who had just been cremated there was a virtuous person, he had a ‘good bone’ (*ru-shod*). It was from this ‘good bone’ that Rupshu derives its name, which refers to the place of the good bone. Most people say that now only the clergy continue to refer to the place by its old name Ru-shod, of which Rupshu is the modified form and the one

most widely used today. . . . Once the monastery was built, Korzok became the focal point of the region of Rupshu and the Rupshu Goba its chief authority.<sup>496</sup>

Although Ahmed’s sources hold that the Korzok Gompa is six hundred years old,<sup>497</sup> and include tales of miraculous events such as a speaking statue, the account nonetheless preserves the role of Tsering Tashi, and notes that lamas from Tibet were involved in the founding along with a Śākyamuni sculpture<sup>498</sup> (such as the one sent by the Fourteenth Karmapa). Also intriguing is the prominence of Tārā, although she is widely beloved in all Tibetan cultures.

The eleven Tārā paintings may be divided into three groups on the basis of the increasing complexity of the composition: A, in which Tārā appears alone (A1–3; Figs. 9.19–9.21 and 9.19a); B, in which she appears with a deity above her (B4–7; Figs. 9.22–9.25 and 9.25a); and C, in which Tārā appears with a deity both above and below her (C8–11; Figs. 9.26–9.29, 9.26a, 9.27a–b, 9.28a, and 9.29a). The paintings vary in size, with none larger than fourteen inches wide and some no more than eight inches wide, with heights correspondingly proportional. The fact that they are not all of the same size confirms that they were not made at the same time as a set and alerts us to their heterogeneous origins. Nine of the paintings are mounted in similar manner and materials as that of the Ninth Karmapa (A1–3, B4–6, C8–10; Figs. 9.19–9.24 and 9.26–9.28). All of these have plain blue silk framing all four sides, red or orange rolling ribbons (streamers), and a recent tie-dyed dust cover. However, only three of the nine (A2, A3 and B6; Figs. 9.20, 9.21, and 9.24) also have—like the Karmapa portrait—a slender inner gold brocade strip immediately outlining the painting. (It is not the case that all three with inscriptions have such an addition,





though two of the three inscribed paintings—including the Karmapa—do have this embellishment.) One painting (C9; Fig. 9.27) in this group of nine similarly mounted Tārā paintings has the addition of a “door” (*thang sgo*) on the lower panel, in what looks to be Indian brocade of silver and yellow medallions on a red ground. Two Tārā paintings (B7 and C11; Figs. 9.25 and 9.29) are mounted singularly—B7 with a red inner brocade border (matching the streamers) and older Chinese blue brocade with a cloud pattern; and C11 with fine Chinese yellow and green figured damask silk on three sides and a contemporary satin red machine-made cloth with colored plant designs on the bottom flare; its streamers are also unique. As we will see, these eccentricities in the mounting reinforce other differences that suggest, with some certainty for B7, an alternate origin.<sup>499</sup>

In every painting with a small deity above Tārā (eight of the eleven), it is either Buddha Amitāyus (B5, C8–11; Figs. 9.23 and 9.26–9.29) or Amitābha (B4, B6–7; Figs. 9.22, 9.24, and 9.25). The four paintings with an additional small deity below (C8–11; Figs. 9.26–9.29) have in every case the same two-armed white goddess holding a *visva-vajra* at her chest with her

right arm and a medicine or monk’s bowl (*patrā*) at her left hip (Figs. 9.27a and 9.28a). This is the two-armed Uṣṇīṣavijaya (gTsug tor rNam gyäl Phyag gNyiś ma).<sup>500</sup> In fact, the four paintings of Group C (Figs. 9.26–9.29) feature the three deities known as the Three Long-life Deities (Tse Lha nram gsum): Amitāyus, White Tārā, and Uṣṇīṣavijaya. Their presence suggests the intentions of the artists to extend the lifetime (of oneself or of others) during illness or old age, during astrologically inauspicious years, because of difficulties arising during meditation practice, or because of prophecies of a curtailed lifespan. This intended function probably carries over to all the White Tārā paintings, whether or not they have the full complement of Long-life Deities.

The three paintings with inscriptions by the Fourteenth Karmapa provide a number of points for comparison, though each is distinct (Figs. 9.18, 9.18a, 9.19, 9.19a, 9.26, and 9.26a). The control in the execution of the brush stroke, a certain tightness in the drawing of the facial features, textile patterns made by aggregating dots of yellow or gold, and the coral, conch, and *cintāmaṇi* offerings are all features shared by the Karmapa portrait (Figs. 9.18 and 9.18a) and the

FIG. 9.26A (above left), detail of Tārā No. C8  
Fourteenth Karmapa Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century

FIG. 9.26B inscriptions on reverse (above)

Tārā C8 (Figs. 9.26 and 9.26a). Also, the two Tārās (Figs. 9.19, 9.19a and 9.26, 9.26a) both sit on a lotus emerging from light blue water surrounded by eddies and supported by drooping green lotus leaves with similar leaf patterns. In both cases the breasts are indicated by two circles, the right nipple simultaneously emphasized and hidden by a necklace ornament. A1 (Figs. 9.19 and 9.19a), the simplest painting with an inscription possibly referring to itself as a *nying thang*, or one-day painting, is looser and more spontaneous in the depiction of the facial features, wisps of hair above the ears, and the sagging bun on the left side of her head. The single, unrimmed halo is less than a perfect circle, as if drawn by a skilled but not expert hand; there is a sun and moon in the corners. As might be expected in a painting done in a single sitting, the background is nearly plain, except for the rippled water. All three inscribed paintings have





FIG. 9.30  
Fourteenth Karmapa Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century





FIG. 9.30, detail (above)

FIG. 9.28A (top right), detail of Tārā No. C10

Two-armed Uṣṇīṣavijaya and lower landscape

Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa Thegchuk Dorje

Korzok Monastery; 19th century

FIG. 9.27A (bottom right), detail of Tārā No. C9

Two-armed Uṣṇīṣavijaya and lower landscape

Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa Thegchuk Dorje

Korzok Monastery; 19th century



the distinctive gradient color, with blue at the top fading to a plain ground, and then in the case of the Karmapa portrait (Figs. 9.18 and 9.18a) and C8 (Figs. 9.26 and 9.26a), to green at the base, though C8 has additional hummocks (two of them supported by eroded escarpments) and a lake. Of these three, only this Tārā (C8) has clouds, both cumulus at the lower horizon line, and the long-tailed bands of blue and white supporting Amitāyus above (Fig. 9.26a). The size of the main figure in relationship to the

picture plane is different in each case. The A1 Tārā (Figs. 9.19 and 9.19a) is largest, dominating the whole space, while the Karmapa portrait (Fig. 9.18 and 9.18a) has a generous allotment of space around him, yet he does not feel lost in the space. The Tārā of C8 (Figs. 9.26 and 9.26a) is by contrast much reduced, though obviously this in the interest of introducing the other two Long-life Deities.

All three inscribed paintings are constructed using repetitive drawing





FIG. 9.25A (above left), detail of Tārā No. B7  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.29A (top right), detail of Tārā  
No. C11  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok Monastery; 19th century



FIG. 9.27B (right), detail of Tārā No. C9  
Attributed to Fourteenth Karmapa  
Thegchuk Dorje  
Korzok monastery; 19th century

formulas particularly evident in the garment folds: a combination of long, flowing lines in the diagonal scarves or swirls of robes, with practiced swallow-tail patterns—such as those between the ankles of the two Tārās—and the symmetrical turning of the red robe hem to reveal the green underside in the Karmapa portrait. Certainly in the latter and in C8, there is a shared tension between

the openness and plainness of the background with precisely drawn intensely colored objects. The one-day Tārā has a more consistent and less insistent flow from one part into another. Could these three paintings have been done by the same hand?

We might be able to answer this

question better if we expand the scope to include the other paintings in the set. Let us immediately eliminate a painting that stands apart—B7, which, as already indicated, has a singular mounting (Figs. 9.25 and 9.25a). Its back is also much darker and thinner than any but one other painting in the set. In the worst



condition of all the paintings, only here is Tārā's chignon upright and not aslant like all the others. Most (but not all) of the other Tārās have a white or blue scarf that circles Tārā's left elbow. In B7 the scarf drapes diagonally across her torso. The lotus is completely different from the others, her hair is adorned with flowers and gold chains, not a crown, and finally, the drawing is clumsier in its handling of the line, less precise, particularly in the trees and offering in the lower section. I would eliminate this from consideration as having come from the same hand or painterly prescription that generated the others. Certainly it belongs to the category of Karma Gardri painting. However, there is a folk painting quality in the face and the inert clouds along the upper border of Tārā's nimbus and at Amitābha's back.

The other painting with a distinctive mounting, C11 (Figs. 9.29 and 9.29a), is also darker than any of the others, though a plain-weave cotton backing precludes determining whether it too had an inscription. It stands out because it is marginally finer than any of the others. The lotus flower is somewhat less formulaic, the eyes look slightly downward to Tārā's right, and her *dhōti* has the subtlest pattern on it, with stripes of alternating width and color, and a hint of gradient shading. The same hints are also visible rimming the main body nimbus of all three figures in the painting. The darkened surface might be because it was recognized as being finer, and so was kept hanging in the abbot's quarters (I am speculating) when the others were rolled up. Or, it may actually be older, done by a more practiced hand, inherited by the Fourteenth Karmapa, and therefore included in the group he gave to the Rupshu chief at the Korzok founding.

Most of the other paintings fit very closely to the inscribed Tāra C8 (Figs. 9.26 and 9.26a). C9 is somewhat stiffer, with a preciousness in demeanor, but this may be because more pink shading

remains on her face, arms, and torso than on the others (Figs. 9.27 and 9.27b). There are other anomalies, such as the Gauguin-like coloring and shapes to the clouds supporting Amitāyus, the stiff lotus petals on the throne, and crudely drawn flowers and trees in groups of three at the bottom (Figs. 9.27 and 9.27b). But most of the garment patterns, including the ruffle around the waist, the trailing scarves draped over the throne, and the long-stemmed lotus at the left shoulder, correspond to the others enough to indicate it is following the same model in paintings associated with Situ Panchen from the eighteenth century.<sup>501</sup>

Based on this type of close examination, I would suggest that the Karmapa portraits, A2, A3, B4, B5, B6, C8, and C10 (Figs. 9.20–9.24, 9.26, and 9.29) fit very comfortably together, with C9 and C11 (Figs. 9.27 and 9.29) not as impossible to link to the primary group as B7 (Figs. 9.25 and 9.25a) would be. This leaves A1 as the remaining outlier, though it has an inscription by the Karmapa (Figs. 9.19 and 9.19a). Is the idea that it is a one-day painting sufficient to account for the differences? It is, as already indicated, somewhat looser and more relaxed, not following as precise a template as the others. A2 and A3 (Figs. 9.20 and 9.21), like A1 (Figs. 9.19 and 9.19a), are compositionally spare, and only have offerings below the central figure but no other deities. They might also be candidates for classification as one-day paintings, given their compositions. Yet they are as tightly constructed in terms of execution as the main group and do not stand apart the way A1 does. An alternative explanation for A1 is that it used a different model for White Tārā than the templates for the other paintings (except B7). Instead of using a model probably based on that of Situ Panchen's painting commissions, it may have used one that either came down from the Tenth Karmapa, whose much looser brushwork and idiosyncratic depictions

of deities derived from his own taste and whose vision is celebrated. It could also have come from one-day paintings that Situ himself painted that may have been freer in handling than his more formal commissions. The Fourteenth Karmapa may have inherited examples of paintings in this other model done by his immediate predecessor, the Thirteenth Karmapa Dūdül Dorje (bDud 'dul rDo rje, 1733/34–1797/98) who was also interested in art and exchanged paintings and received lineage transmissions from Situ Panchen.<sup>502</sup> But once again, this is only conjecture. If we are to admit the evidence of the three inscriptions and apply it to the group as a whole, accepting that most of them are the work of the Fourteenth Karmapa—and I see no reason to reject this—then we must also conclude that he was able to paint in more than one manner, one that was more painstaking and time-intensive and one that was freer and more rapid. That is not a difficult proposition to accept.

I would like to conclude with a brief summary of the characteristics of the Karma Gardri style, building on chapter 5, as well as considering why this style never took hold among artists in Ladakh and Zangskar. It seems that Tibetan as well as Western commentators agree that there is something particularly “Chinese” about the art associated with the Karma Gardri style. The Thirteenth Karmapa Dūdül Dorje, the disciple of Situ Panchen, notes: “Gradually colors became thinner, and the mood expressed [or style] more distinguished. The paintings of Nam-[mkha']-bkra-[shis] [a sixteenth-century artist] had still thinner colors, and landscapes *painted in a Chinese style*. It became known as the ‘Encampment Style’ (*sgar ris*).”<sup>503</sup> George Roerich, in *Tibetan Paintings*, wrote in 1925 (when he was just twenty-three years old): “the school in the Kham province in Eastern Tibet”



was distinct from the Lhasa and Gyantse school and observed that the school of Derge in Kham “*points towards Mongolia and China*”.<sup>504</sup> Tucci similarly observes that “the mysterious poetry of space,” visible in certain schools—the one example given is that of Kham—is derived from Chinese art: “China not only gave this painting a sense of space, she also opened the eyes of Tibetans to landscape; it was of course a conventional landscape, imitated *from Chinese models*.”<sup>505</sup> Gega Lama also notes that the Karma Gardri “has its *origins in the Chinese schools of painting*,”<sup>506</sup> while Marylin Rhie also asserts that “[t]he Eastern Tibetan schools, the most famous of which is the Karma Gardri . . . are *intimately related to painting movements in China*.”<sup>507</sup>

It seems that everyone agrees that Chinese landscape was especially important in the development of the Karma Gardri style. Yet the same can be and has been said about the New Menri (sMan ris) style that coalesced in the seventeenth century at Tashilhunpo in central Tibet around Tsangpa Choying Gyatso (gTsang pa Chos dbyings rGya mtsho; active mid-seventeenth century). Exemplifying that style is the depiction of Go Lotsawa Zhonnu Pal (’Gos Lo tsa ba gZhon nu dPal, 1392–1481) from the well-known set of Panchen Lama pre-incarnations that was promulgated in various forms throughout the Geluk domains (Fig. 9.31). Jackson has argued persuasively that the original designs for the woodblock prints on which many sets (on canvas, silk, paper, or woven brocade) were based “may well have been [by] the famous Chos-dbyings-rgya-mtsho, even though we have no way of knowing whether the originals were actually painted by his own hand or by one of his major pupils following his exact instructions.”<sup>508</sup> This painting (Fig. 9.31) belongs to one of several such sets retained at Kyi Gumpa in Spiti, which had enduring institutional

connections with Tashilhunpo, sending monks there for advanced training over the centuries. This painting also adapted some of the conventions of Chinese blue-and-green landscape painting to provide a setting and to bind together scenes organized in hieratic scale.<sup>509</sup> Yet within its intricate spaces that create a towering but shallow space parallel to the picture plane, it is completely different in the landscape setting from the Karma Gardri paintings we have considered. Thus more precision with regard to “Chinese landscape painting” is required when distinguishing one type of Tibetan painting with “Chinese” characteristics from another.<sup>510</sup>

Since the Karma Gardri emerged around the same time or a little later than the New Menri (or Tsangri) style, it is possible to consider the former as a kind of stripping away of the crowded compositions of the latter. In that sense, the simplification can be seen as a reaction to the increasing density of New Menri and to the Karma Gardri’s own early phase, as exemplified by the Tetsa lineage painting (Figs. 9.5–9.5c), which shares much with the New Menri. It makes a great deal of sense to find the inspiration for the New Menri’s eventual blue-and-green formula (for a formula is what it became) in the lavish fifteenth-century court paintings of arhats, examples of which have been found in central Tibet.<sup>511</sup> According to this developmental narrative, the Karma Gardri artists seized on the possibilities of adapting a looser brushwork found in some Chinese paintings and a different conception of space, one that goes back to sources other than the fifteenth-century arhat paintings. Instead of the brittle spatial qualities of New Menri, which must be constantly adjusted and negotiated as they push and pull toward the picture plane and back into depths, the Karma Gardri style can have a more relaxed and tranquil atmospheric relationship between figure and ground.<sup>512</sup>

As Rhie has observed, in Karma Gardri painting, “gradations of subtle color . . . create an atmospheric illusion of space . . . which completely and readily draws the viewer into its depths”; she refers to it as “*idyllic naturalism*.”<sup>513</sup>

Rather than the colorful Buddhist arhat painting of the Ming, the minimalist depiction of landscape can be found in a range of painting genres in Chinese painting, from portraiture to bird-and-flower painting, on both silk and paper, usually combining ink brushwork with light colors. It is impossible to single out a single artist or school that provided the bulk of the models for Karma Gardri-style landscape, since the placement of portraits against a minimally indicated setting was conventional since the fourth or fifth century in China and always remained an option for its painters, professional and literati. The mastery of atmospheric minimalism in Chinese painting built on the naturalistic achievements of Five Dynasty (907–960) and Northern Song (960–1127) monumental landscape masters, with the court-academy and so-called Chan painters in Hangzhou of the Southern Song (1127–1279) reducing these grand vistas to quiet corners. They miniaturized the views, making them as intimate as the poetry that accompanied them, and like their literary counterparts, more evocative than descriptive. These discoveries were never lost to Chinese painters and were literally expanded upon by the so-called Zhe school of the Ming period.

The spaces created around the Korzok Tārās, the Tantaḥ Vajrasattva and Padmasambhava, the Tetsa Vajrasattva, and the Korzok Karmapa portraits reduce the setting into a few intimations of mountains forming a horizon line and occasionally a lake at the bottom. Otherwise the landscape is merely suggested, without the mundane plotting of perspectival apparatus. The artists and patrons realized that the more-is-less approach actually has its



virtues in conveying sacred qualities. The works succeed in suggesting dispersed immanence, a state of being both in and beyond space; Dietrich Seckel similarly observed in certain Japanese Buddhist paintings with a corresponding minimalist treatment of the background, the empty setting “imparts to them also a timeless quality because they are removed from the flow of time into an ‘Eternal Now’ which includes all present, past and future, just as spacelessness includes all dimensions. They are, therefore, embedded in the infinite background of undefinable emptiness from which they radiate in spiritualized loftiness without, however, completely entering the present world.”<sup>514</sup> They convey the potential of presence in the phenomenal world, of movement toward it, and of entering into it (never departing it) without being bound by it.

The atmospheric space conjured by the minimalist “Chinese” techniques have another virtue besides the spiritual implications. It is remarkably well suited to artist-practitioners such as Situ Panchen, the Tenth Karmapa and, in this context, the Fourteenth Karmapa, who took a great interest in art and attained impressive levels of skills in painting but probably did not have the time to master the tight formulas and techniques of certain kinds of intricate painting. Compared to the dense, complicated landscapes of the New Menri (Fig. 9.31), the Karma Gardri style could be executed in a mode that is much less challenging technically, since it sincerely makes a virtue of emptiness.<sup>515</sup> Without requiring all of the technical skills honed by professional painters who trained from youth, these paintings still succeed in evoking an appropriately spiritual space, “beyond the alternative of two- or three-dimensional space,” but rather a “supra-empirical, visionary sphere of liberation.”<sup>516</sup> The Karma Gardri style allowed competent, enthusiastic but still amateur (in the original sense of “those



who do it for love, not money”) artists to accomplish credible paintings despite the heavy demands that leaders of spiritual lineages typically face. In turn, it lent itself to the kind of “one-day painting” that religious masters who were proficient amateur painters could produce for their own religious edification and aesthetic pleasure. Such objects, in turn, as we have seen, well served the purpose

FIG. 9.31  
Go Lotsava Zhonnu Pal  
From a set of Panchen Lama pre-incarnations, designed in the mid-17th century  
Kyi Gompa, Spiti; ca. 18th century



of gifts to devoted followers, who would treasure not only that the image was of one pertinent religious figure but was painted by another revered eminence.

This brings us back to the initial issue: that despite the presence of fine examples of Karma Gardri-style painting in a number of monasteries in both Ladakh and Zangskar, they seem to all be imports and did not inspire artists to work in a similar style. Except for the extent that the contemporary Eri or Tsangri style incorporate ideas or qualities of Karma Gardri painting, eighteenth- through twenty-first-century artistic practice in Ladakh and Zangskar provides little or no evidence of the Karma Gardri mode. A larger issue is at stake here. It seems that institutional connections are more determinative of the dominating aesthetic stance adopted by affiliated artists than aesthetic preferences *per se*. Since Drukpa monasteries of Ladakh forged connections with central Tibetan and Bhutanese Drukpa practitioners, the art they patronized was similarly interlaced with the art of those regions. Geluk monasteries in Ladakh and Zangskar were, as we have mentioned for Kyi Monastery of Spiti, largely affiliated with the Panchen Lama's monastery of Tashilhunpo, while Ladakh's Drigung monasteries engaged artists trained in the Driri style(s). Because of the power of the woodblock prints in disseminating central Tibetan compositions, and because so many paintings from Tashilhunpo were brought back to Ladakh and Zangskar by returning monks as well as in exchanges between hierarchs and nobles, the artists working for Ladakh and Zangskar's Geluk monasteries participated in a Geluk aesthetic "hegemony." Despite the occasional intrusion based on personal contacts and random acquisitions, institutional networks played the dominant role in setting the aesthetic agendas for artists working in those places far from central Tibet, including Ladakh and Zangskar. The localization in western Tibet which

is visible between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries in variations of a distinctive regional mode based on the Khache, or Kashmiri style, was then disrupted. The power of the Ganden Phodrang government, and the conflicts that developed between it, Bhutan, and Ladakh, seem to have had far-reaching effects on the art of the entire Tibetan cultural horizon. By driving the Kagyu into Kham, it actually helped to stimulate the Kham Karma Gardri style; on the other hand, the geographical distance from Kham made the Gelukpa of western Tibet focus on the closer Tashilhunpo, and the Drukpas on the surviving Drukpa connections in central Tibet and Bhutan. The Karma Gardri-style paintings in their midst, absent Karma Kagyu monasteries in Ladakh and Zangskar, were exotic intrusions, not viable models.

The question might be raised, do Tibetan artists *ever* respond to aesthetic novelty by modifying their style to incorporate what they admired in imported art? Was it ever a prime motivator for the development of Tibetan painting? While it could be argued in reply that the very transformation of styles in Ladakh and Zangskar predicated on access to the art being produced at institutional centers such as Lhasa, Tashilhunpo, and Punakha in Bhutan was at least partly an aesthetic response to the impressive, highly polished composition, drawing, and painting being imported, there is another more obvious example of stylistic changes motivated by aesthetic rather than institutional association. This is the introduction of aspects of Chinese landscape painting into all Tibetan painting movements by the seventeenth century and onward that we have just been considering. There were no institutional pressures to adopt Chinese-derived methods of creating settings. Rather it was driven by the visual effects of unity or even—in the case of Karma Gardri-style painting—ennobling isolation of the main and

subsidiary figures when placed in less abstract spaces found in earlier painting. To be sure, such issues can easily become circular and tautological. If the Lhasa artist is responding to visual novelty seen in Chinese painting, then why is the Ladakhi artist who begins to work in the same style responding to institutional imperatives? How does the simple binary of aesthetic response versus institutional affiliation deal with paintings of Tsongkhapa painted in the Karma Gardri style found at Geluk monasteries in eastern Tibet?<sup>517</sup> Why is it that a regional style sometimes trumps all other considerations? Clearly, we are still far from an understanding of the complex ways in which lineage, regionalism, artists' and patrons' aesthetic responses, and institutional affiliations affect artistic choices in Tibetan art. It is precisely to that desirable end that this essay and this book are dedicated. We can go beyond Tucci's grandiloquent but antiquated notions of styles acting *upon* artists, rather than vice versa, and restore agency to Tibetan artists.<sup>518</sup>

As a coda, I introduce a final painting in the style related to the Karma Gardri, possibly of the twentieth century, found in the Thukje shrine near Tsokhar, north of Tsomoriri in eastern Ladakh. The very modest shrine is built around a narrow cave in the cliffs on the northeastern side of the salt lake (Fig. 9.32). The cave—more of a cleft in the rock—now houses a white marble four-armed Avalokiteśvara of no great age within an unrelated but very handsome silver frame of greater antiquity. Among the dozen or so mostly tattered local *thangkas* is an import that stands out. It depicts a very conventional, iconometrically standard Buddha Śākyamuni, seated beneath the Bodhi tree against a sky bare of clouds (Fig. 9.33). The background is clearly that of Kham. Most unusual are the naturalistic scale of



FIG. 9.32 (above right)  
Thukje shrine near Tsokhar, eastern Ladakh

FIG. 9.33 (below left)  
Śākyamuni Buddha seated beneath the  
Bodhi tree in Kham style  
Thukje shrine, Tsokhar, eastern Ladakh;  
ca. 20th century

FIG. 9.33, (below right) detail

the tree in relation to the figure, and the treatment of the bark on the trunk (Fig. 9.33, detail). It is strikingly “Chinese” in the sense that it seeks to emulate the marks of the brush and ink of Chinese landscape painting. This provides more evidence that Kham artists were indeed looking east and that Ladakhi artists and patrons had access to these products from the other side of the Tibetan world, but in their own creations chose to face “up” to the art of those religious centers such as Punakha in Bhutan and Tashilhunpo in central Tibet.





## CHAPTER 1

<sup>1</sup> This chapter emerged as a result of a lecture I delivered at Bukkyo University in Kyoto, Japan, in September 2005. My old friend Prof. Shunzo Onoda kindly invited me to participate at the international symposium, “The Styles of Buddhist Art in Asia–Tibetan, Mongolia and Bhutan.” See also D. Jackson 2006 in Shunzo Onoda et al. ed. 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. C. Luczanits 2001, p. 126f. Luczanits’s category, “workmanship,” which he explained as meaning “origin of the artist” should be more clearly differentiated from provenance and stylistic tradition.

<sup>3</sup> For the resulting publications on style and dating, see J. Singer and P. Denwood eds. 1997 and I. Kreide-Damani ed. 2003.

<sup>4</sup> C. Luczanits 2001, p. 126; and see now also C. Luczanits 2011, p. 171.

<sup>5</sup> For a summary of the steps involved in dating thangkas, see D. Jackson 2003.

<sup>6</sup> See H. Kreijger 2001 and Sotheby’s New York, *The Jucker Collection of Himalayan Paintings*, March 28, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Dan Martin kindly identified Tsuggyen Norbu as the Mustang king in an email to me.

<sup>8</sup> See also D. Jackson 1984b, p. 129, where he is called Phun tshogs gtsug rgyan nor bu or Tshé dbang.

<sup>9</sup> *Glo bo gdung rabs*, fol. 54b–56a: *de’i sras/ a mgon tshe dbang ngam/ rje gtsug rgyan nor bu zhes pa/ de ni gdung/ ’dir sras kyi phong pas zhabs brtan sku rim sogs mang zhig dang/ khyad par bsam yas rgyal po’i/ khyed kyi dgong zhed la gdug/ ’dre ngas kyang grogs byed cas lung bstan rjes/ sku ltam/ ’khrungs ltas khyad par/ ’phags dang/ skyes chen ’gas stag bshams* [fol. 55a] *pa’i sprul par bzhed cing/ ’khrung tsam dus sku bsham la stag ris yod par gnam/ lugs gnyis la mkhyen pa’i spyen gor gzhan las che zhing/ bod mon zhal mjal gsung thos kun gyi smon la mjal sdud zhu mi yang mangs/ sku mched gzhan med pas/ yab kyi rgyal srid la dbang bkur bas/ ’dis rgyal srid chos bzhin bskyangs pas pha rol po’i phyi nang dgra’i tshogs rmeq med du bcom nas bde skyid rdzogs ldan du spyod/ sras gnyis ’khrungs nas/ byang sems so mthar sdom pa (b)zhes/ rgyal ba rje btsun stag rtse pas rjes su bzung/ phyag rgya chen po/ chos drug sogs kyi zab chos bsan/ mnga’ bdag mnga’ dbang chos rgyal nas/ rnying ma’i skor mtha’ dag zhugs/ dol po bla ma ngag dbang don ’grub nas/ ma cig khros nag skor zhus nas brtul* [fol. 55b] *shugs spyod pa bskyangs/ rgya gar ’jo ki mangs po sku zhabs su car ba dang/ stod*

*pa rgyun mi chad/ sam kr ta’i skad sogs zhab chos kyi las ’brel sad pas dus ’da’ bar mdzad nas/ rgya gar nang pañd ta’i cha lugs dang chos bkas thugs mtshims/ yum chen khros ma nag mo’i zhal zgigs par sgrags/ thugs sgrub gtor dngogs ’bring po dang/ de’i dkyil chog sogs pa’i gsung rtsom dang bcas pa (=sa?) dkar rnying gsum chos ’khor ma lus pa thugs nyams su bzhes shing grub pa thob/ mngon dga’ chos sde btab/ grwa sdus kha shas sa kar rnying ma’i chos gang sar so so’i lugs kha ma nyams/ rgyud chog/ phyag len bri thig dbyangs rol/ snyen sgrub sogs sre spu tsam med pa’i ’khangs dag dper ’jog pa’i yon tan mtha’ yas pa rkang tshugs mdzad pas ’di ni grub thob skyes chen rgya gar pañ chen kho na’i brtul* [fol. 56a] *shugs thob pas sku tshe gcig la/ rgyal srid ma nyams bskyangs pa dang/ mthar grub pa thob nas rang gzhan smin sgrol la bkod pa sogs mdzad pa mtha’ klas pa brjod pa mi nus pa ’dir sa spyad tsam mo//.*

<sup>10</sup> The new edition of D. Snellgrove 1967 was published in Kathmandu by Himalayan Bookseller in 1992.

<sup>11</sup> See British Museum inventory nos. 1989 11–6.01 through 11–6.04, “Lamas of Dolpo.”

<sup>12</sup> See K. Debreczeny 2009 in D. Jackson 2009.

<sup>13</sup> See D. Jackson 2009, p. 148.

<sup>14</sup> See D. Jackson 2011, chapter 4, and S. Kossak 2010, chapter 7.

<sup>15</sup> See D. Jackson 2011, figures 4.7, 4.11–4.14 and 5.14–5.20.

<sup>16</sup> D.-I. Lauf 1976, p. 116, pl. 37: “A sTag lung abbot.”

<sup>17</sup> The caption nearest Shuchen reads: *dpal stug brtogs brjod brgya brgyad ri mo’i lam// dang po ’dren pa tshul khrims rin chen dang// lha dga’ mched ’khor bcas pa sor rtse yi// zlos gar ji ltar bsgyur nas bris pa’i tshul//*. The caption below the adjoining sub-scene with Rinchen Migyur Gyaltsen just to the left: *rgyal ba’i rtogs brjod dpag bsam ’khri ba yi// yal ’dab tshig brgya brgyad pa’i gzugs bkod rnam// phyag mchod rien* [2 illegible syllables] ... *an zhing e wañ pa// rin chen mi ’gyur rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po//*

<sup>18</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, footnote 705. Shuchen wrote verses to accompany paintings of Rinchen Migyur Gyaltsen, which were preserved in Shuchen’s collected works, vol. 5, pp. 383–386.

<sup>19</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, p. 314.

<sup>20</sup> See also the depictions of Tashilhunpo Monastery, as a detail from a thangka, in M. Henss 1981, Figs. 73 and 74. Henss reasons

that it must have been painted before ca. 1780 when the mausoleum of the second Panchen (1663–1737) was built—otherwise that structure should have been shown.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Martin Brauen ed. 2005, no. 41.

<sup>22</sup> The Tibetan spellings of the word *e bris* and *e ris* both refer to an official style of calligraphy, according to Melvin Goldstein ed. 2001.

<sup>23</sup> One painting style that did become universal in Tibet was the Beri, which dominated most of Tibet from about the 1350s to about the 1450s. See D. Jackson 2010.

<sup>24</sup> See A. Ferrari trans. 1958 and T. V. Wylie 1962.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Elena de Rossi Filibeck 1988, *Two Tibetan Guide Books to Ti se and La phyi* (Bonn: Monumenta Tibetica Historica); and Huber, Toni and Tsepak Rigzin 1999, “A Tibetan Guide for Pilgrimage to Ti-se (Mount Kailas) and mTsho Ma-pham (Lake Manasarovar),” in Toni Huber ed. 1999, *Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan Culture: A Collection of Essays* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives), pp. 125–153, as Rob Linrothe kindly reminded me.

<sup>26</sup> See Andreas Gruschke [Amdo, vol. 1] 2001a, [Amdo, vol. 2] 2001b, [Kham, vol. 1] 2004a, and [Kham, vol. 2] 2004b.

<sup>27</sup> Victor Chan 1994. See also the hiking guide of Gary McCue 2010 and Yukiyasu Osada et al. 2010, *Mapping the Tibetan World*.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. H. Kreijger, 2001, nos. 40 and 41.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, no. 67.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. also the differently dressed and much older Jankya Trulku in D. Jackson 2009, Fig. 1.23. For contemporaneous portraits of the Manchu emperor as a lama and emanation of Mañjuśrī, see also D. Jackson 2009, Figs. 1.22, and Yumiko Ishihama 2005.

<sup>31</sup> See D. Snellgrove 1967, *Four Lamas of Dolpo*, Plate 37, Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara with guru lineage, and Plate 38, Machig Labdrön with assembly-field (*tshogs zhing*).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the grid of clouds in Gega Lama 1983, p. 198.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. M. Rhie 1999, p. 56ff.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. E. Lo Bue 2010, p. 77, who asserts that Ngorchen invited Newar artists to “decorate the temple” and paint other sets of thangkas, though according to my understanding, they only painted for him this Vajrāvali set.

<sup>35</sup> A project worth considering would be to study in a synchronic way the regional styles



throughout Tibet in their respective provinces in recent centuries (e.g., in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries). Let us try to identify five to ten typical thangkas from each province from the same century, or from the same generation or quarter century, in order to clarify how things stood throughout Tibet during that time. We would start with the most richly documented periods and document all available murals.

<sup>36</sup> See Heather (Stoddard) Karmay 1975, p. 30, and D. Jackson 2011, p. 19ff.

<sup>37</sup> See C. Luczanits 2011, p. 218, note 564.

<sup>38</sup> A striking example is a painting of Vanaratna, the Bengali pandita and mahāsiddha, who could be identified not from an inscribed main figure but from an iconographically similar lineage guru for whom the characters “. . . tna” were all that remained in an otherwise effaced inscription. See Jackson 2011, fig. 3.20.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. the three similar statues that were discussed in D. Jackson 2011 as Figs. 3.23, 3.24 and 3.25.

<sup>40</sup> I was delayed by incomplete photographic documentation. The photos of Fig. 1.16 reached me at the last possible moment.

<sup>41</sup> See A. Heller 2010, p. 96, note 9, citing Roberto Vitali’s introduction to Wagindrakarma’s *The Historical Record of the Three Silver Brothers of Khojarnath* [*Jo bo rin po che dngul sku mched gsum rten dang brten par bcas pa’i dkar chag rab dga’i glu dbyangs*] (Dharamsala, 1996), p. 13.

<sup>42</sup> See Jacques Barzun and Henry Graff 1992, *The Modern Researcher*, p. 159, “Probability the Guide,” and p. 166, “Truth rests not on possibility nor on plausibility but on probability.”

## CHAPTER 2

<sup>43</sup> See Rase Könchok Gyatsho 2009, p. 27, who summarized the history of Tibetan painting in an article on the future prospects of the painting of Tibet as follows: the spread of the Menri and Khyenri traditions, next came the Karma Gardri, the New Gardri—the painting school of the Drigung tradition—the New Menri and the New Khyenri, and finally the Eri and Tsangri styles. He adds that in Amdo (as in Rebkong) and in Kham (as in Derge), the established local styles such as the Khamri differed from those in Ü.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Gyurme Dorje 2004, p. 18. He divides Greater Tibet from a more Lhasa-centric or Ü-centric perspective into the seven geographical zones of Lhasa (the capital), “Central Tibet” (the Kyichu Valley), Southern Tibet (Lhokha and Kongpo), “Western Tibet” (Tsang and Latö), Northern Tibet (the Jangthang plateau), “Far-western Tibet (Ngari),” “Eastern Tibet” (Kham), and “Far-eastern Tibet” (Amdo and Gyalrong).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Gyurme Dorje 2004, p. 775.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Geoffrey Samuel 1993, p. 100ff., who lists them as five groups, dividing for example the Nepal Himalayas into eastern and western. Samuels explains (p. 108) that distinction as mainly for convenience, adding that it also

reflected some noteworthy cultural contrasts. His system has the advantage of reflecting the old border between western Tsang and Ngari, which lay in the central Nepal Himalayas between Nubri and Manang and Mustang.

<sup>48</sup> Geoffrey Samuel 1993, p. 100f.

<sup>49</sup> On Bhutan and Sikkim, see Geoffrey Samuel 1993, pp. 104–107.

<sup>50</sup> On Tibetan regions of Eastern Nepal see *ibid.*, pp. 107–109.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>52</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 110–112.

<sup>53</sup> Yeshe Jamyang, interviewed on September 9, 1995, at Leh, Ladakh, by Nyurla Ngawang Tsering. Clare Harris 1999, p. 68, has presented this listing in translation or paraphrase, without the original Tibetan wording.

<sup>54</sup> Yeshe Jamyang, interviewed on September 9, 1995, at Leh, Ladakh, by Nyurla Ngawang Tsering. Cf. Clare Harris 1997, p. 268.

<sup>55</sup> Yeshe Jamyang explained that the style of E district was the painting tradition of the Lhasa government (*lha sa’i gzhung gi ri mo*). Cf. C. Harris 1999, p. 69, who seems to have not understood “*e bris*,” but only its gloss, “*dbus bris*.”

<sup>56</sup> Cf. D. Jackson 2009, Figs. 7.17–7.19.

## CHAPTER 3

<sup>57</sup> Gyurme Dorje 2004, p. 136ff. Gyurme Dorje calls the central part of Ü “Central Tibet.”

<sup>58</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 164–253.

<sup>59</sup> For thangkas depicting tutelary deities in a recent Eri style, see G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo 1989, vol. 2, nos. II-305, 306 and 315. For numerous examples from the early twentieth century preserved in Potala Palace, see Rig ’dzin rdo rje et al. 1985, *Bod kyi thang ka*, plates 15, 27, 30, 44, 45, 51, 64, and 124, and probably 125–128.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. also Phüntshok Tsheten et al. compilers 2000, pp. 178 and 179.

<sup>61</sup> See also the entry *sprin mig* (“cloud-eye”) in the art dictionary of Tenpa Rabten and Ngawang Jigme 2003, p. 533.

<sup>62</sup> The five visions *rJe zgigs pa lnga ldan* are explained in the iconographic dictionary, ‘Jigs med chos kyi rdo rje 2001, *Bod brgyud nang bstan*, p. 203.

<sup>63</sup> C. Harris 1999, p. 68f., was understandably confused by informants who indiscriminately used “New Menri” for all recent (hence “new”) continuations of the Menri. This leads her to consider (p. 68) the *New Menri* to be a misnomer and assert (p. 69) the Üri style as a New Menri style. It would be better to classify the twentieth-century Üri style (E style) as an “*Old Menri School of Central Tibet*” (as she quotes on p. 65 Rigzin Paljor’s manual as doing). Cf. also the chart of G. Béguin 1995, p. 72f., which wrongly shows all recent Menri as “sMan ris gsar ma,” evidently following S. and J. Huntington 1990, p. 614f, who based themselves in turn on E. Gene Smith 1970. But compare E. Gene Smith

2001, p. 255, where in the revised version of his introduction to Kongtrül’s encyclopedia that assertion has been correctly dropped. Yet see E. Gene Smith 2001, p. 125, where in a revised edition of his introduction to the Autobiography of the First Panchen Lama, the old mistake was retained: “The New Sman ris was the precursor of the mode that is now usually called the Lhasa or Central Tibetan style.”

<sup>64</sup> Eyül is now in part of modern Chusum country of Lhokha; see, for instance, Gyurme Dorje 2004, p. 230.

<sup>65</sup> See Phüntshok Tsheten et al. comps. 2000, *The Mirror of the Murals in the Potala*, pp. 178–179, etc. A painting of the same subject in a very similar style is found in the Tibet House, New Delhi (HAR 72040), as Rob Linrothe pointed out to me.

<sup>66</sup> See E. Gene Smith 1970, p. 46.

<sup>67</sup> See D. Jackson 1993, p. 116.

<sup>68</sup> D. Jackson 1996, p. 345 and note 779. My assertion seems to have found acceptance by Clare Harris 1999, p. 65. Harris’s uncertainty (*ibid.*) about the founder of the New Menri (*sman ris gsar ma*) is simply a confusion of two similar names, Tsangpa [gTsang pa] Chöying Gyatsho and the Tenth Karmapa Chöying Dorje (Karma pa Chos dbyings rdo rje 1604–1674). The identities of these contemporary artists are now well established: see D. Jackson 1996, part II, chapters 8 and 9. Harris calls the New Menri a misnomer, but she misunderstood in her interview with Sanggye Yeshe that he was actually referring to the famous scholar-bureaucrat Desi Sanggye Gyatsho (1653–1705) and not the Tsang artist Chöying Gyatsho.

<sup>69</sup> M. Rhie 1999, p. 68.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> See G. Béguin 1995, p. 67f.

<sup>72</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, p. 345.

<sup>73</sup> Tenpa Rabten, interview, Leiden, 2000. Tiny reproductions of two thangkas by Tenpa Rabten (“Temba Rabden”) appear in C. Harris 1999, p. 39.

<sup>74</sup> Tenpa Rabten provides dates and brief biographies of several prominent Epa artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in his history of Tibetan art. See Tenpa Rabten 2007, pp. 176–179. See also Tenpa Rabten and Ngawang Jigme 2003, pp. 510f. and 619f., under Drung gtogs and E pa.

<sup>75</sup> Letshen is defined by L. Petech 1973, *Aristocracy*, as “lesser official in a government agency (*las khungs*).”

<sup>76</sup> C. Harris 1999, p. 89, fig. 38.

<sup>77</sup> Tenpa Rabten, interview, Lhasa, October, 2003.

<sup>78</sup> See Veronika Ronge 1982, p. 155f.

<sup>79</sup> In D. Jackson 1996, pp. 358 and 361, notes 827 and 828, I gave a few details about Wangdrak’s father and grandfather, but these have been updated here though information kindly given by Shekar Ngawang Norbu, interview, Bodhnath, March 22, 1996.

<sup>80</sup> Wangdrak was the main informant for the book D. Jackson 1984. Shekar Ngawang Norbu,



- interview, Bodhnath, March 22, 1996, stated that Wangdrak had been born in 1925 and died in his sixty-fourth year at Rajpur, near Dehra Dun.
- <sup>81</sup> Ngawang Norbu of Shekar, interview, March 22, 1996, Bodhnath.
- <sup>82</sup> Shekar Ngawang Norbu, interview, Bodhnath, March 22, 1996.
- <sup>83</sup> Wangdrak, interview, Rajpur, 1975/1976. Ngawang Norbu said the Sakya renovation was done in about 1488.
- <sup>84</sup> Shekar Ngawang Norbu, interview, Bodhnath, March 22, 1996.
- <sup>85</sup> For an interesting account of the art and ways of life of “Au Leshi” (born about 1915–1920 and died in the late 1980s) and the Sherpa artist “Kapa [Khepa] Par Gyaltzen” (mKhas pa dPal rgyal mtshan?), see Hugh R. Downs 1980, pp. 100ff. and 116ff.
- <sup>86</sup> The name Chidu Gangpa is vaguely reminiscent of Chiu Gangpa (Byi’u sGang pa), an alternative name for Trulku Chiu (sPrul sku Byi’u), founder of the Chiuri (Byi’u ris) style of western Tsang in the early fifteenth century.
- <sup>87</sup> For many years, Ngawang Norbu drew illustrations for Tibetan newspapers in Darjeeling. In 1979 at the Twenty-fifth All-India Handicrafts Weeks in Calcutta, he won first place and a thousand-rupee prize for a thangka showing the Buddha’s overcoming the temptations of Mara (based on a Derge xylograph).
- <sup>88</sup> The term *sbyangs sha thon pa* is defined in M. Goldstein ed. 2001, p. 779, as “to show that something was practiced/studied.”
- <sup>89</sup> Shekar Ngawang Norbu, interview, Bodhnath, March 22, 1996.
- <sup>90</sup> Ngawang Norbu of Shekar similarly affirmed that one of the major differences between Üri style (of Lhasa) and Tsangri style (of Tashilhunpo) was that the latter favors unbalanced compositions. In the Tsang painting style, the bodies of deities were a bit fatter or fleshier, a little like in Newar painting; while in the Üri they were thinner around the shoulders.
- <sup>91</sup> Wangdrak, interview, Rajpur, 1982. Presented in D. Jackson 1996, p. 358 and note 821.
- <sup>92</sup> See Kachen Losang Phüntshok 1993, pp. 91–93, 95f, and 98.
- <sup>93</sup> See G. Béguin 1995, p. 67f.
- <sup>94</sup> G. Béguin 1995, p. 72f., based his historical chart on S. and J. Huntington 1990, p. 614f., though mentioning (p. 71) the problems of interpreting Huntington’s enormous work of synthesis, especially in the absence of illustrations.
- <sup>95</sup> See D. Jackson 1984a, p. 136, “cloud linings.” The only meaning I know for *phing* is vermicelli, a Chinese loan word. Could it be related to the word *phing* meaning lentils or peas, as in *phing rtsam*, flour made of ground fresh lentils or peas?
- <sup>96</sup> Cf. also the *dkar bcad sum mdangs* (“thrice shaded white outline”) decorations illustrated in dKon mchog bstan ’dzin et al. 2010, vol. 2, p. 82f.
- <sup>97</sup> Cf. D. Jackson 1996, pl. 67.
- <sup>98</sup> For another typical Tashilhunpo Tsang style of the first half of the nineteenth century, see M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991, no. 99.
- <sup>99</sup> *Bil ba* is aegle marmelos according to M. Goldstein ed. 2001, p. 721. The aegle is a genus of thorny trees of tropical Asia and West Africa; the fruits are included among the eight auspicious substances, *bkra shis rdzas brgyad*. See ’Jigs med chos kyi rdo rje 2001, p. 1188.
- <sup>100</sup> Phüntshok Tsheten et al. comps. 2000, *A Mirror of the Murals in the Potala*, p. 156f.
- <sup>101</sup> It presumably was the twenty-third in a lineage such as the Stages of the Path, though his life is told in unusual detail for a series of lineal gurus. On the reverse of the painting is an inscription that some have read as: “Left ten. Gyalwa Losang Gyatsho.” The original Tibetan inscription is: *g.yon bcu’is pa rgyal ba blo bzang rgya mtsho*, which actually says “twelfth to the left.” (The words *bcu’is pa* are actually a contraction for *bcu gnyis pa*, i.e., “twelfth.”)
- <sup>102</sup> The captions: top left (1): *sprin med dus char sogs dge ltas du ma dang ldan pa*; and (2): *bltams pa’i tshe yum gyi smal du bud med rgyan chas’chor bas sogs gzigs shing/me sprul zla 2? tshes 23? la’khrungs pa*.
- <sup>103</sup> The last two captions, top right (13): *sku mtshams dus bya rog las’phra ba zhig du sprul nas phebs pa*; and (14): *zangs mdog dpal ri sogs dag zhing du gshegs n’as* [unclear] ?? [abraded] *’gros shing bstan’gro’i slang dor bstan pa* [one missing syllable].
- <sup>104</sup> In D. Jackson 1996, p. 164, I wrote that the Khyenri had died out by the early twentieth century, but I now believe it was then still followed by a handful of painters.
- <sup>105</sup> Wangdrak, interview, Rajpur, 1982. I previously presented this in D. Jackson 1996, p. 358 and note 821.
- <sup>106</sup> These five are just a beginning. In future comparisons we should also take into account several other telling features, such as the treatment of head and body nimbuses.
- Nor bu gling ga and Its Connection with the Murals of the Klu khang Behind the Potala.”
- <sup>112</sup> On the murals in the lower floor of the Lukhang, see Erberto Lo Bue 2010b, “The Śambhala Murals in the Klu khang and Their Historical Context: A Preliminary Report.”
- <sup>113</sup> See the caption to D. Jackson 2005a, Figure 2.
- <sup>114</sup> Cf. M. Rhie 1999, p. 67.
- <sup>115</sup> D. Jackson 1996, p. 114f.
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 246, n. 545.
- <sup>117</sup> Cf. M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, p. 454f.
- <sup>118</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 454f.
- <sup>119</sup> On this painting set see also D. Jackson 1996, p. 213.
- <sup>120</sup> See Rigdzin Dorje et al. 1985, *Bod kyi thang ka*, no. 52.
- <sup>121</sup> In D. Jackson 2005a, p. 106, caption to fig. 3, I called it “Ü Province court painting from the period of the regent Sanggye Gyatsho.”
- <sup>122</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, part II, chapter 8, and p. 234.
- <sup>123</sup> For the prints, see G. Tucci 1949, Figs. 90–101.
- <sup>124</sup> See The Palace Museum 1992, p. 32, no. 10, whose dimensions are given as 82.5 x 52.5 cm., considerably bigger.
- <sup>125</sup> M. Rhie 1999, p. 159ff.
- <sup>126</sup> See also G. –W. Essen and T. T. Thingo 1989, nos. I–89 and II–254.
- <sup>127</sup> See M. Henss 1981, p. 202 and fig. 73, detail from a Brussels collection.
- <sup>128</sup> The two sacred mountains were kindly identified by Karl Debreczeny.
- <sup>129</sup> M. Rhie 1999, p. 368 says the coloration and depiction of floral forms in HAR 439 are similar to eighteenth-century Chinese paintings.
- <sup>130</sup> Phüntshok Sangpo 1996, p. 19. His painting of a Nyingma assembly field, executed in 1971, was published in C. Trungpa 1975, no. 23, p. 73.
- <sup>131</sup> The name Bro khyung is unknown to me, but he must have been a great exponent of the school in his generation.
- <sup>132</sup> Kyide Shar is not to be confused with the famed artistic community of painters and statue makers that lay one mile to the south of Tashilhunpo and that was called Tashi Kyitshal. See J. Clarke 2002, p. 116.
- <sup>133</sup> Phüntshok Sangpo 1996, p. 18.
- <sup>134</sup> Phüntshok Sangpo 1996, p. 17. For an eighteenth-century Tsang style painting of the Panchen Lama series of rebirths, see Erberto Lo Bue 1998, p. 38f., pl. 13.
- <sup>135</sup> During the mid-twentieth century, Lhatse county in western Tsang was home to about fifteen or sixteen painters who followed a more conservative and provincial Tsangri-style tradition. See D. Jackson 1996, p. 367, n. 826. Lhatse was already a home for painters by the 1430s, the time of the painting of the dPal ’khor stūpa in Gyantse.

## CHAPTER 4

- <sup>107</sup> See Könchok Tendzin et al. 2010, vol. 1, p. 157: *rin chen dang po gser du bgrangs mod kyang/gser gyi thog mar gtsang spang gtsang mthing*. Azurite and malachite were not really types of gold, of course.
- <sup>108</sup> Phüntshok Sangpo 1996 and Kachen Losang Phüntshok 1993.
- <sup>109</sup> Acarya Ngawang Samten 1986, nos. 3–8 and 13–19. The first group is wrongly identified as Gardri style; the second group depicting the famous Panchen Rinpoche set (thangka 13 is the same composition as cat. 131, HAR 477) is just called “Menri.”
- <sup>110</sup> Cf. A. Neven 1978, *Études d’art lamaïque et de l’Himalaya* (Bruxelles: Oyez) who did use the two stylistic categories of Üri style and Tsang style, though mistaking one for the other.
- <sup>111</sup> On the upper floor of the Lukhang, see Jakob Winkler 2010. “The Dbu yab pho brang in the



- <sup>136</sup> On painters from Tsedong in recent generations, see D. Jackson 1996, p. 357, and p. 367, n. 816. (On sculptors from Tsedong, see J. Clarke 2002, p. 118.)
- <sup>137</sup> Phüntshok Sangpo 1996, p. 18. Lha bris dBu chen dBang ‘dud of Tsedong was assisted at Sakya by the dBu chung Zla ba don grub and ‘Jam dbyangs. He is mentioned in D. Jackson 1996, p. 357, as “Jo lags dBang ‘dus lags of bDe skyid gling village in rTse gdong.”
- <sup>138</sup> D. Jackson 1996, pp. 358 and 367, n. 824.
- <sup>139</sup> The Tibetan version is entitled: *Bod kyi thang ka’i ‘bri rtсал: Chos rgyal ‘phag pa’i mdzad thang*. See also the Chinese and English versions of Shuwen Yang et al. comp. 1987.
- <sup>140</sup> Yang et al. 1987, p. 14.
- <sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 17.
- <sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 14.
- <sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 23.
- <sup>144</sup> On (Thuchen) Wangdu Nyingpo and his sons, two of whom founded separate lama palaces at Sakya, see C. W. Cassinelli and Robert B. Ekvall 1969, *A Tibetan Principality: The Political System of Sa sKya* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), p. 20. Wangdu Nyingpo was the twenty-first generation in the Sakya Khon family: dBang sdud snying po a.k.a. dPal ldan chos skyong (1763?-1806?, Sakya Khri chen 33, tenure 1783–1806). After a childless first marriage, he married two sisters from the rTa nag Rang byon pa family. To the elder sister, Rang byon ma bsKal bzang lha yi bu khrid ‘chi med tshe dbang, three children were born:
1. Padma bdud ‘dul dbang phyug (1792–1853), Sakya Khrichen 34, a.k.a. mThu stobs bstan ‘dzin bzang po, founder of the sGrol ma Pho brang
  2. Ngag dbang kun dga’ rin chen (1794–1856), founder of the Phun tshogs Pho brang
  3. dNgos grub dpal ‘bar (1808–1879)
- From dBang sdud snying po’s third wife, Rang byon ma Dam tshig sgrol ma, the younger sister from the rTa nag Rang byon pa family, two children were born:
1. Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1802–1841), stayed at bKras brtsegs Bla brang with mother
  2. rJe btsun A bi Da la a.k.a. Padma phrin las, nun, stayed at bKras brtsegs bla brang with mother
- Another possibility is that the two main figures of Fig. 4.21 depict the two sons of Sa chen Ngag dbang kun dga’ blo gros (ca. 1717–1783?), thirty-second Sakya throne holder: 1. dBang sdud snying po a.k.a. dPal ldan chos skyong (1763–1806?), Sakya Khrichen 33, tenure 1783–1806; and 2. E waṃ bzang po a.k.a. Kun dga’ phan bde rgya mtsho (1766–1788), a monk.
- <sup>145</sup> Inscription front, bottom: *om swasti// dkyil ‘khor rgya mtsho ‘i khyab bdag rdo rje ‘chang// byams brtse nus pas ‘gro rnam sgrol ba’i slad// kun dga’i mtshan dper shar ba’i sgyu ‘phrul gyi// bstan ‘dzin rgya mtsho ‘i gtsug rgyan zhabs la ‘dud//* (end, verse 1)
- gang de’i gzugs sku blta bas mi ngoms pa// mngon sum gsal ba’i skal ba bral na yang// de dag gnyis su med pa’i sku brnyan ‘di// dad*

*ldan bsod nams zhing du bzhengs pa’i dges//* (end, verse 2)

*rgyal bstan dar zhing rdo ‘dzin zhabs pad brtan// ‘gro kun bde skyid yar zla’i dpal la spyod// bdag sogs ‘dul bya mtha’ dag mgon [mchog des?]/ rjes bzung don gnyis ldan gyis ‘grub par shog//* (end, verse 3)

*de ltar sku brnyan rin po che mthong ba’i mod la yid kyi brtan pa mtha’ dag gcig char du ‘phrog pa ‘di’ang/ e waṃ thar rtse bla brang nas rgyu shyor yongs kyi bdag po hgyis te rta nag lha bris skal bzang rab rgyas kyis sor mo’i zlos gar las bskrun pa’i tshul ched du brjod pa ‘di ni ‘jam dpal dgyes pa’i bshes gnyen gtsug lag smra ba’i nyi ma phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba’i sdes smras pa dge legs ‘phel// mamga la shri dzwala dzambu dwipama [?] antul//*

- <sup>146</sup> Cf. P. Pal 1997, p. 69, who wrongly identifies the sponsor as “Kunga Tenzing Gyatso.” The English translation of the inscription is neither complete nor reliable.
- <sup>147</sup> The identity of the author of the inscription was kindly clarified to me by Mr. J. Heimbels in an email. Cf. P. Pal 1997, p. 69.
- <sup>148</sup> Cf. ibid., who dates the painting “ca. 1700.”
- <sup>149</sup> P. Pal 1997, pl. 34, p. 68.
- <sup>150</sup> Other overlooked inscriptions include D. Jackson 2011, Fig. 1.21, as pointed out by Mr. J. Heimbels. The missing verses in homage of Ngorchen and Mūchen are, bottom right: *kun mkhyen gsang gi bdud rtsi yi[s]// dga’ ston ‘phel la ‘gro la ‘gyed mdzad pa// bzang po’i phrin las gdun bya yi// dpal du [gyur pa] la phyag ‘tshal//*. Bottom left: *dkon mchog dges pa’i [lhag bsam] can// mi mthun phyogs [las rnam] rgyal [ba’i]// dge mtshan dpal yon bzang po can // dpal ldan bla ma’i zhabs la ‘dud//*. These verses of praise are from the *Lam ‘bras bla ma mchod pa’i chos ga*, found in the *gDa-ma ngag mdzod*, vol. 6 (*cha*) pp. 357–385.

Another related painting missing its inscription is D. Jackson 2011, fig. 3.11. The inscription mentions Ngorchen’s teacher Sharchen Yeshe Gyaltsen (Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan) as the patron: *[thog] ma med pa nas mchog m[two characters missing]s kyang mi’i gzugs kyi ‘gro ba’i don ma lus pa bcom [doubtful] par mdzad pa’i bdag nyid chen po chos kyi rje dpal ldan sa skya pa chen po kun dga’ snying po zhes yongs su grags pa’i bka’ drin dang yon tan tshad med pa rjes su dran pa’i sgo nas shākya’i dge slong ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i thog drangs khams gsum pa’i sems can thams cad rnyog pa dang bral ba’i yid rab tu gus pas phyag ‘tshal lol//*

- <sup>151</sup> See K. Tanaka 2005, p. 74.
- <sup>152</sup> See dKon mchog bstan ‘dzin et al. compilers 2002, pp. 1–9, figs. 1–9.
- <sup>153</sup> Cf. ibid., nos. 1–9; see D. Jackson 1996, Figs 180 and 181.
- <sup>154</sup> Cf. also K. Tanaka 2005, no. 27, which seems to be in a New Menri style of Kham.
- <sup>155</sup> See The Palace Museum 1999, *Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism Collected in the Qing Palace* (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House), plates 16–1 and 17–1.

- <sup>156</sup> Cf. also HAR 351, which M. Rhie 1999, p. 386, takes to be a work of the New Menri style, possibly from Tashilhunpo.

- <sup>157</sup> See Maria Antonia Sironi et al. 1995, who reproduce two thangkas from Pema Chödang (in Porong) in figs. 39 and 77. The latter may be in the local Tsang Menri of Shekar.
- <sup>158</sup> Gangsur Dargye (sGang zur or Gangs chen zur pa Dar rgyas, b. 1931) of Dar, interview, Bodhnath, Feb. 27, 1995.
- <sup>159</sup> Gangsur Dargye of Dar, interview, Bodhnath, Feb. 27, 1995.
- <sup>160</sup> According to Dargye, in general, they used to speak of four iconometric traditions (*thig tshad lugs bzhi*): “the Menthang tradition (sMan thang lugs), the tradition of Mipham (Mi pham lugs), the tradition of Ngülchu (dNgul chu lugs), and the tradition of Palmo (dPal mo lugs),” though I don’t know who the last two were.
- <sup>161</sup> Dargye must have been referring to the other painters at Shekar, such as the Chidugangpa, and not to the family of Wangdrak of Shekar.
- <sup>162</sup> Gangsur Dargye, speaking in 1995, said: “The Tsangri is starting to copy the Üri, and the Menri is starting to adopt from the Karma Gardri (or Khams bris)!”
- <sup>163</sup> Gangsur Dargye of Dar, interview, Bodhnath, Feb. 27, 1995.
- <sup>164</sup> Regarding these two Sherpa painters, see H. Downs as cited in D. Jackson 1996, note 800.
- <sup>165</sup> See Tsedong Penpa Dorje 2001, p. 136.
- <sup>166</sup> Gangsur Dargye of Dar, interview, Bodhnath, Feb. 27, 1995.
- <sup>167</sup> See J. Clarke 1997.
- <sup>168</sup> D. Jackson 1996, p. 96.
- <sup>169</sup> E. Gene Smith 1970, and Smith 2001, p. 256.
- <sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 336, note 865.
- <sup>171</sup> C. Stearns 2007, fig. 1, and p. 481, note 164.
- <sup>172</sup> See also D. Jackson 2011, fig. 1.16.
- <sup>173</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, p. 96.
- <sup>174</sup> See C. Stearns 2007, p. 13f.
- <sup>175</sup> C. Stearns 2010, *The Buddha from Dolpo*, p. 62.
- <sup>176</sup> See ibid., 2010.

## CHAPTER 5

- <sup>177</sup> On the geography and cultural monuments of the Qinghai and TAR parts of Kham, see A. Gruschke 2004a and 2004b. See also G. Samuel 1996, chapter 4, “Tibetan Societies: K’am (Eastern Tibet),” On the history of Kham, see also Lawrence Epstein ed. 2002, *Khams pa Histories: Visions of People, Place and Authority* (Leiden: Brill).
- <sup>178</sup> Sanggye Yeshe (1924–2009), formerly the resident painter of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, for instance, came from Dzachukha in Kham.
- <sup>179</sup> Gyurme Dorje ed. 2004, p. 400.



- <sup>180</sup> See Gyurme Dorje 2004, p. 403. See also G. Samuel 1993, p. 73.
- <sup>181</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, p. 335.
- <sup>182</sup> Namgyal G. Ronge 1982, p. 334. His stylistic classifications seem to have been overlooked in later studies.
- <sup>183</sup> N. Gonpo Ronge 1982, p. 337.
- <sup>184</sup> The Kham Menri artists of Gakhok include those of Dzonyak Samdrup documented by A. Gruschke 2004b, Kham, vol. 2, p. 199, picture no. 106. Here, one of the artists from the local family of painters works on a thangka.
- <sup>185</sup> Cf. Namgyal Gonpo Ronge 1982, p. 336, re: the painting of Padmasambhava (O rgyan tshe yi rig 'dzin) illustrated on p. 341.
- <sup>186</sup> Lobzang Jamyang (Blo bzang 'jam dbyangs) of Chatreng, interview, Dharamsala, 1996.
- <sup>187</sup> According to Losang Jamyang, artists from Chatreng were commonly also called to the two neighboring districts of Lithang and Gyalthang to paint.
- <sup>188</sup> D. Jackson 2009.
- <sup>189</sup> According to a long footnote in Tashi Tsering's forthcoming article "Si tu Panchen and His Painting Style: A Retrospective" (to appear in a Journal of the International Association for Tibetan Studies online Situ volume), Rumtek's old Sixteen Arhat (Gnas brtan beu drug) set is said to have been painted in the early twentieth century by Sönam Yeshe (bSod nam ye shes) of Japa Gönsheb (Ja pa dGon zhabs) in Nangchen. Sönam Yeshe was a direct disciple of the famous artist Kardruk (Kar 'brug, 1860–?) of Namda (gNam mda') who belonged to the Karma Kagyu monastery of Nezang Gön (gNas bzang dgon) in Atro (A khro) in Gapa. Sönam Yeshe had Lama Tanor (Bla ma rta nor) of Gochen Gön (Sgo che dgon), Nangchen, for his disciple. The latter's disciple is his son Tshering Nyima (Tshe ring nyi ma), who nowadays continues the Karma Gardri tradition in Nangchen. Tashi Tsering added that [in the 1960s or early 1970s] a set of thangkas portraying the Marpa tradition tantric deities (Mar lugs rgyud sde) was painted for Rumtek by Lama Tragyal (Bla ma bKra rgyal 1900–1976) of Surmang Dütsi Thil (Zur mang bdud rtsi mthil) at the request of the Sixteenth Karmapa. Rigultshang (Ri mgul tshang) of Lingtshang (Gling tshang), who lives in Kathmandu, and Konchok Lhadripa (Dkon mchog lha bris pa, b.1955) of Tsering Art School of Shechen (Zhe chen) Monastery in Boudhnath are students of the late Lama Tragyal, who used to say he could paint in Menri, Gardri, and "[an eclectic mixture] combining [bits from everywhere like a] bird nest" (Bye'u tshang 'dus,) and that in his older days, he had more chance to work in the Karma Gardri.
- <sup>190</sup> See Kar shod Karma dge legs 2010, pp. 73–77.
- <sup>191</sup> On Situ's artistic contributions, see also my earlier *Patron and Painter* catalog, D. Jackson 2009.
- <sup>192</sup> See K. Debreczeny 2009.
- <sup>193</sup> I discussed the painting in D. Jackson 2009, p. 22.
- <sup>194</sup> See *ibid.*, Figs. 1.21 and 9b.
- <sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, Figs. 9.33 and 9a.
- <sup>196</sup> I discussed this copy of the set in D. Jackson 2009, p. 168.
- <sup>197</sup> On Chamdo Phurba Tshering see D. Jackson 1996, p. 328.
- <sup>198</sup> See D. Jackson 2009, fig. 6.1.
- <sup>199</sup> Another example is K. Tanaka 2001, p. 94f., pl. 39.
- <sup>200</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, p. 328 and p. 363, note 736.
- <sup>201</sup> See Kar shod Karma dge legs 2010, p. 73.
- <sup>202</sup> Kar shod Karma dge legs 2010, p. 73, says it was Kunga Tenphel.
- <sup>203</sup> Cf. the small golden orbs with deities in R. Linrothe ed. 2006, cat. no. 25.
- <sup>204</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 234.
- <sup>205</sup> In R. Linrothe ed. 2006, cat. nos. 24 and 25 the spiral cloud swirls are numerous.
- <sup>206</sup> For another painting of the eight great tantric adepts (*siddha*) from Kham, though with different iconography and painting technique in the Rubin Museum of Art, see HAR 65170. See also R. Linrothe 2006, p. 204 and no. 9.
- <sup>207</sup> See dKon mchog bstan 'dzin et al 2010, vol. 1, p. 132, "painters from Chamdo," and pp. 167 and 190, where both Grupa Tshang family painters are photographed at work: Lhabso Sönam Delek and Lhabso Chökyong Tshering.
- <sup>208</sup> Pema Namdol Thaye 1987, Maitreya, p. 80; and Vajrapāṇi, p. 154.
- <sup>209</sup> Pema Namdol Thaye 1987, Avalokiteśvara, p. 108 and 113; Mañjuśrī, p. 103; and Vajrakīla, p. 158.
- <sup>210</sup> M. Rhie 1999, p. 476.
- <sup>211</sup> D. Jackson 1996, p. 313, pl. 63.
- <sup>212</sup> As I noted in D. Jackson 1996, footnote 705, and above, Shuchen did write verses to accompany paintings of Rinchen Migyur Gyaltsen, which are preserved in Shuchen's collected works, vol. 5, pp. 383–386.
- <sup>213</sup> Cf. M. Rhie 1999, p. 469.
- <sup>214</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 469.
- <sup>215</sup> See R. R. Ernst 2001, p. 907, fig. 6, Takla Mebar."
- <sup>216</sup> See M. Rhie 1999, p. 155, re: WT no. 11, "Birth of Śākyamuni Buddha."
- <sup>217</sup> Rhie (*ibid.*) discusses other possibly Derge paintings on pages 155, 235, 258, 399, 447 and 469.
- <sup>218</sup> Compare M. Rhie 1999, WT 180 (HAR 210).
- <sup>219</sup> According to the entry for HAR 414, it is from "Palpung / Situ Painting School."
- <sup>220</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 494; and compare *ibid.*, p. 71, col. 1.
- <sup>221</sup> Tenpa Rabten and Ngawang Jigme 2003, p. 515. Derge Göntchen Lhündrup Teng is the main monastery of Derge and the site of the printing house.
- <sup>222</sup> bsKal bzang, comp. 1992, p. 288.
- <sup>223</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, p. 314.
- <sup>224</sup> Yönten Tshering 2000, p. 15.
- <sup>225</sup> The Derge xylograph sacred art prints, including those of Thanglha Tshewang, were published in the book dKon mchog bstan 'dzin, rDor dril and Byang dga' compilers 2002, where those by Thanglha Tshewang are specified.
- <sup>226</sup> Regarding these two painters, see also D. Jackson 1996, p. 55 and D. Jackson 2009, p. 267, note 416. "Tare Yoka" (Tārāyoga?) might be the Tibetan names sGrol ma rnal 'jor or Thar pa bsam gtan.
- <sup>227</sup> Kar shod Karma dge legs 2010, p. 75.
- <sup>228</sup> Karl Debreczeny kindly informed me of this in a personal communication.
- <sup>229</sup> See Thang lha tshe dbang 2006, *Thang lha tshe dbang phyag bris gces bsgrigs bzo rig mig rgyan*. Chengdu: Si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa. (edited by dKon mchog bstan 'dzin et al., Thanglha Tshewang art research committee). (I am indebted to Karl Debreczeny for kindly giving me a copy of this rare and crucial book.)
- <sup>230</sup> My account of Sanggye Yeshe is based in part on Ge Wanzhang 1996, p. 260.
- <sup>231</sup> On Nyitsho Gönpa in Tawu, see for instance Gyurme Dorje 2004, p. 539f.
- <sup>232</sup> See A. Gruschke 2004b, pp. 83–85.
- <sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, picture no. 58.
- <sup>234</sup> See N. G. Ronge 1982, p. 337.
- <sup>235</sup> Per K. Sørensen 2005, p. 249.
- <sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.
- <sup>237</sup> M. Henss 2005, p. 267.
- <sup>238</sup> See Tenpa Rabten 2007, no. 5, [no pagination], *sgar bris 'bri tshul gyi thang ka'i dpe mtshon*.
- <sup>239</sup> The narrative episodes are depicted in Rig 'dzin rdo rje et al. 1985, *Bod kyi thang ka*, nos. 33–39. Cf. the version in about one hundred episodes, Lokesh Chandra ed. 1972, *Buddha in Chinese Woodcuts*. Śāta-Pitaka Series vol. 98.

## CHAPTER 6

- <sup>240</sup> See Liu Lizhong 1989; A. Gruschke 2001a and 2001b; Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen 2001; R. Linrothe 2001; and several recent Bon publications.
- <sup>241</sup> Marilyn Rhie 1999, p. 445 and 477, nos. 178 and 188, proposed two identifications, but they were not stylistically typical enough to be useful. Rob Linrothe identified many recent paintings from Rebkong (Rob Linrothe 2001, p. 60), and proposed a few examples of Amdo painting from the Rubin Museum of Art.
- <sup>242</sup> A. Gruschke 2001a and 2001b.
- <sup>243</sup> Liu Lizhong's book is prominently mentioned by Michael Henss 2008, p. 6, as an early comprehensive Chinese survey of Tibetan monasteries and monuments.
- <sup>244</sup> G. Samuel 1996, p. 87.
- <sup>245</sup> On the geography of Amdo, see G. Samuel 1996, chapter 5, "Tibetan Societies: Amdo



- (Northeastern Tibet),” and A. Gruschke 2001a and 2001b.
- <sup>246</sup> See Gyurme Dorje 2004, p. 544.
- <sup>247</sup> See Gyurme Dorje 1996, p. 557.
- <sup>248</sup> I follow Amdo sources in counting Gyalrong a part of Amdo. It may also be considered part of Kham.
- <sup>249</sup> Liu Lizhong 1989, p. 88, stated that most of Labrang’s paintings were executed by painters from Rebkong.
- <sup>250</sup> See Gyurme Dorje 2004, p. 549.
- <sup>251</sup> Chöje Gönpa in Dzöge is a Sakya exception. See A. Gruschke 2001b, p. 56.
- <sup>252</sup> See Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen 2001, in chapter 4, “History of Painting in mDo smad.”
- <sup>253</sup> Tsöndrū Rabgye was born Bimdo (sBi mdo) in Xunhua (Tib. Dobi) county of Qinghai province, China. Bimdo Göñchen (Bis mdo dgon chen) was Tsöndrū Rabgye’s home monastery. It is the largest monastery in the area, the home of the late Panchen Rinpoche Chökyi Gyaltsen, 1949–1989.
- <sup>254</sup> Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen 2001, p. 107.
- <sup>255</sup> For more details about Gö Pañdita, see also the article about him by Khuchuk (Khu byug 1998), which illustrates two of his thangkas.
- <sup>256</sup> K. Tanaka 2003, p. 138: “This thangka may therefore be assumed to have been produced in rNga-yul in Eastern Tibet in the twentieth century.”
- <sup>257</sup> ‘Dzam thang bla ma Ngag dbang blo gros grags pa, *Jo nang chos ’byung*, p. 78: *kun dga’ yon tan rgya mtshos dgon der ’tshogs khang bzhangs pa dang | dge ’dun gyi sde gsar ’dzugs dang dus mchod smon lam sogs tshugs par mdzad cing dpal mi ’gyur nges* [p. 79] *don bde chen gling zhes btags | ma nyes thar mo dgon chu nyin du gsar ’debs byas nas bkra shis phun tshogs gling zhes btags | tshes mda’ a dpa’ dgon yang gsar du dag ther mdzad | se dgon thub bstan phyogs las rnam rgyal gling gsar ’debs byed pa ’i zhal bkod dang sa ’dul sogs mdzad | gang gi thugs sras su gyur pa dpal rig ’dzin rnam snang rdo rjes se dgon gyi mgon khang du rten rdzas dang rtag gtor btsugs te | gtor sgrub dang | gtor chen rgyun gsol rnam bsgrubs nas nus mthu’i rtal myur ba’i rtags mtshan mgon gyur dang ldan par byas pa sogs kham phyogs su slad nas chos gzhi dang | nges don sgrub brgyud kyi bstan pa ches dar ba.*
- <sup>258</sup> See A. Gruschke 2001b, pp. 78–80.
- <sup>259</sup> Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen 2001, p. 108.
- <sup>260</sup> Amdo Jamyang Losal (of Somang in Gyalrong) was the first thangka painter in Indian exile to publish an art manual with proportion examples. His book was acquired by the U.S. Library of Congress in 1982 and cataloged as follows: Jamyang. *Bod kyi ri mo bri dpe = A new approach to the practice of Tibetan art / composed by Jamyang (Artist)*. Mussoorie, U.P.: Jamyang, 1982. The title on the cover was: *New-sun self-learning book on the art of Tibetan painting*. Jamyang Losal also known as Amdo Jamyang published it himself from where he lived in Mussoorie, India (not New Delhi). Cf. Clare Harris 1999, p. 206, note 28, who cites it as published in New Delhi. It was reprinted in Dharamsala from the Sherig Parkhang in 1992.
- <sup>261</sup> See Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen 2001, p. 110.
- <sup>262</sup> Several of his surviving paintings and sculptures at Kumbum are listed by Re gong pa ‘Jigs me bsam grub 2002, p. 130f.
- <sup>263</sup> Rob Linrothe kindly informed me in an email that he found the painting as plates 68 and 69 in a book called *Taer Si* edited by Li Zhiwu and Liu Lizhong, (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982). *Taer Si* is Chinese for Kumbum.
- <sup>264</sup> Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen 2001, p. 110. They refer to Namkhai Norbu’s comments about nomadic art in Dzachukha and reason that the art of Golok might be similar.
- <sup>265</sup> See Hungkar Dorje ed.; Chong Da, Chogyi, and Kelly Lynch (translators) 2001, *Tangkas In Golog: The Tangka Album of Lung-ngon Monastery* (Beijing: Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, 2001); Tibetan title: *mGo log thang ga. Lung sngon dgon pa’i zhal thang phyogs bsgrigs*.
- <sup>266</sup> A. Gruschke 2001b, p. 67ff., and photos no. 144–146.
- <sup>267</sup> For other scholarly contributions on Rebkong, see Mark Stevenson published in 1999 two articles on the recent art in Rebkong: M. Stevenson 1999, “Art and Life in A-mdo Reb-gong since 1978,” *Tibetan Studies* 9, vol. V, pp. 197–219; and 1999b, “The Politics of Identity and Cultural Production in A-mdo Reb-gong,” *Tibet Journal*, vol. 24, no. 4 (1999), pp. 35–51.)
- See also Sarah E. Fraser, “Ethnic Difference and National Identity.” Her paper, which is posted online as part of a Northwestern lecture series, addresses the interactions between two painters in Republican-period (1912–1949) China: a Tibetan artist, Shawo Tsering (1922–2004), and a Chinese artist, Zhang Daqian (1899–1983).
- <sup>268</sup> Re gong pa ‘Jigs med bsam grub 2002a, p. 128, lists ten leading painters from those four places.
- <sup>269</sup> See Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen 2001, p. 128–136. Gyurme Dorje 1996, p. 595, listed four Rebkong artists who were celebrated in their own right in the mid-1990s: Shawo Tsering, Gyatsho, Kunzang and Jigme (now deceased). His list was followed by A. Gruschke 2001a. Gyurme Dorje 2004, p. 609, says that three of the four great artists were by then deceased, though actually all four were. Other prominent painters were Gyatsho of Sengge Shong Magotshang (already older than 80 in early 1990s) and Nyenthok Jigme (Nyenthok Jigme Nyima, died early 1990s). See A. Gruschke 2001a, p. 221, note 37.
- <sup>270</sup> Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen 2001, pp. 131–133. Shawo Tsering’s two sons are Gendün Dargye (Gendeng Daji, a monk) and Suo Nan (Sönam Gyatsho, adopted layman).
- <sup>271</sup> Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen 2001, pp. 134–136.
- <sup>272</sup> Ibid., pp. 133f.
- <sup>273</sup> Ibid., pp. 129f.
- <sup>274</sup> See ‘Jigs med theg mchog 1988, pp. 790–799. The same passage is quoted at length by Tsedong Penpa Dorje 2001, p. 141ff.
- <sup>275</sup> ‘Jigs med theg mchog 1988, p. 793.
- <sup>276</sup> Ibid., p. 791.
- <sup>277</sup> These formed part of the articles Reb gong pa ‘Jigs med bsam grub 2002a, “Bod du sku gzugs bris ’bur sogs kyi byung ’phel skor rags tsam gleng ba,” *Krung go’i bod rig pa*, vol. 2002.2, pp. 113–131; and Reb gong pa ‘Jigs med bsam grub 2002b, “Bod kyi bris ’bur sgyu rtal gyi byung ’phel skor bshad pa,” *Bod ljong zhib ’jug*, vol. 2002.2, pp. 80–90.
- <sup>278</sup> Könchok Tendzin et al. 2010, *Bod kyi lag shes*, pp. 135 and 146.
- <sup>279</sup> The previous owner was selling that Rebkong local clan history by the page to an American foundation supporting the publication project. The Senggeshong passage as it stands seems to be a fairly recent compilation that is aimed mainly at glorifying their lineage, with many repetitive elements. It claims to be based on historical documents (citing sources at the end of each section). It would be good to check its assertions against whatever outside sources have survived, such as inscriptions from monastery murals.
- <sup>280</sup> R. Linrothe 2001, “Creativity, Freedom and Control in the Contemporary Renaissance of Rebkong Painting,” *Tibet Journal*, vol. 26–3/4, pp. 5–91. See also the color illustrations in R. Linrothe 2002, “Stretched on a Frame of Boundless Thought: Contemporary Religious Painting in Rebkong,” *Orientations* (Hong Kong), vol. 33–4, pp. 48–56.
- <sup>281</sup> R. Linrothe 2001, p. 8.
- <sup>282</sup> R. Linrothe 2001, p. 18, lists these qualities of recent (post-1959) Rebkong painting:
1. fine line work
  2. distinctive light tonalities and color contrasts
  3. generous gold outlining and ornamenting
  4. exquisite detail and dense patterning
  5. selective realism
  6. restricted use of non-religious popular motifs and manners
  7. characteristic landscape patterns
  8. visually assertive figural nimbi
  9. workshop-like repetition of compositions and motifs
- On p. 19 he described treatment of sky and nimbuses, also discussing mountains and lakes.
- <sup>283</sup> For details of slightly different three-lobed cumulus clouds shaded with *gsags*-style shading in the same tradition, see Tsöndrū Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen 2001, illustration no. 71.
- <sup>284</sup> I was kindly informed of this by Rob Linrothe in a personal communication.
- <sup>285</sup> Liu Lizhong 1988, *Buddhist Art of the Tibetan Plateau*, plates 421–434 and 439–449.



- <sup>286</sup> Several more paintings from Amdo were published in another illustrated book from the 1980s, *Buddhist Pictorial Art of Tibet*. However, the four thangkas that are reproduced on the front and back of the dust jacket (depicting Buddha Śākyamuni, Avalokiteśvara, Tsongkhapa, and Padmasambhava) are also definitely in a different style, that of Tashilhunpo in Tsang. These were probably the works of Kachen Losang Phüntshok.
- <sup>287</sup> Rob Linrothe in a personal communication told me that he believed the murals from the Sendzin Lhakhang (San 'dzin Lha khang) in Nyenthok just north of Rebkong town confirm the attribution of Figure 6.12 to Amdo. They also depict Tsongkhapa and life scenes, though they are possibly a little earlier (circa late 18<sup>th</sup> century).
- <sup>288</sup> Compare the central figure's hat with that in a depiction of Jonang Tāranātha, Musée des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, Paris, France. (MG 21 241). See G. Béguin 1991, no. 20, p. 67; and D. Jackson 1996, pl. 28.
- <sup>289</sup> Cf. M. Rhie 1999.
- <sup>290</sup> The first book-length study of Bon iconography was by P. Kvaerne 1995. See also S. Karmay and J. Watt eds. 2007, who compiled a catalog on Bon art.
- <sup>291</sup> Samten Karmay in the appendix to his historical overview (see Samten Karmay in S. Karmay and J. Watt eds. 2007, no. 51, p. 79f.) transcribes the names under the lamas. His guru no. 42 was sNang ston g.Yung drung bstan pa'i nyi ma.
- <sup>292</sup> See K. Tanaka 2005, p. 211.
- <sup>293</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 141f.
- <sup>294</sup> K. Tanaka 2005, no. 97.
- <sup>295</sup> See Carmen Meinert ed. 2011, *Buddha in the Yurt: Buddhist Art from Mongolia* (Munich: Hirmer Publishers).
- <sup>296</sup> Compare *ibid.*, nos. 50, 51, 59, 77, and 262.
- CHAPTER 7**
- <sup>297</sup> John C. Huntington, 1972, "Gu-ge bris: A Stylistic Amalgam," *Aspects of Indian Art* (Leiden), pp. 105–117.
- <sup>298</sup> See D. Jackson 2010, figs. 7.28 through 7.30.
- <sup>299</sup> See the publications on Tabo by Deborah Klimburg-Salter et al. (Deborah Klimburg-Salter et al. 1997, *Tabo a Lamp for the Kingdom: Early Indo-Tibetan Art in the Western Himalayas*).
- <sup>300</sup> See D. Jackson 2009, p. 90.
- <sup>301</sup> See D. Jackson 2010, p. 2.
- <sup>302</sup> Victor Chan 1994, pp. 964–972.
- <sup>303</sup> See D. Jackson 2010, pp. 126ff.
- <sup>304</sup> See Helmut F. and Heidi Neumann 2011.
- <sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>306</sup> See D. Jackson 2010, p. 103.
- <sup>307</sup> D. Jackson 2009, pp. 122ff., concerning figure 6.31 of that catalog.
- <sup>308</sup> P. Pal et al. 2003, p. 157.
- <sup>309</sup> Gendün Gyatsho would have been only ten years old in 1486.
- <sup>310</sup> P. Pal et al. 2003, p. 157.
- <sup>311</sup> See also D. Jackson 2010, fig. 7.30.
- <sup>312</sup> See Ewald Hein and Günther Boelmann 1994, p. 134. Compare also the more complete photograph of the same mural in M. Rhie 1991, p. 57, fig. 23, photograph by E. Bernbaum, 1988.
- <sup>313</sup> Compare M. Rhie 1991, p. 57, fig. 23, a detail of a mural of the White Temple (Lha khang dkar po) of Tholing, Guge. A smaller portion of the same mural is published by E. Hein and Günther Boelmann 1994, p. 134.
- <sup>314</sup> Compare, for example, E. Hein and Günther Boelmann 1994, p. 115f.
- <sup>315</sup> The structure of the painting has been shown in D. Jackson 2009, p. 161, diagram [K].
- <sup>316</sup> Compare D. Jackson 2011, figs. 2.9, 3.13 and 3.14.
- <sup>317</sup> See *ibid.*, figs. 3.12 and 3.15.
- <sup>318</sup> D. Jackson 1996, p. 346–351.
- <sup>319</sup> See Franz-Karl Ehrhard 2000.
- <sup>320</sup> See E. Lo Bue ed. 2010, a monograph on the artistic heritage of Mustang, and D. Jackson 2010, figs. 7.20–7.27.
- <sup>321</sup> D. Snellgrove 1967; reprint 1992.
- <sup>322</sup> At least one Kagyu thangka of the seventeenth century attributed to Ladakh by G.-W. Essen and T. Thingo 1999 actually came from Dolpo in eastern Ngari: their no. I-95 (II-284), which is Figure 7.7 of this catalog.
- <sup>323</sup> On these lamas of Dolpo, see David Snellgrove 1967.
- <sup>324</sup> Franz-Karl Ehrhard 1996. See also M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1996, no. 177 (31b); and G.-W. Essen and T. T. Thingo 1989, no. I-95 (II-284), for other paintings commissioned by the same patron, "sprang po" Ngag dbang rgyal (b. 1626), who should not be confused with his famous contemporary Zhabs drung Ngag dbang mam rgyal of Bhutan. We should also correct my inaccuracy in D. Jackson 1996, pl. 65.
- <sup>325</sup> On Rechungpa, see Franz-Karl Ehrhard 2010 in Anne Chayet et al. eds. 2010.
- <sup>326</sup> For references to rGod tshang Ras chen, see F.-K. Ehrhard 2010, p. 158, in Anne Chayet et al. eds. 2010 (Indus Verlag).
- <sup>327</sup> The remainder of this chapter summarizes the fieldwork of E. Lo Bue 1983, my own observations in Ladakh from the same period, and more recent published accounts—including the brief reminiscences of one important Ladakhi informant presented in Jackson 2002. In the following pages, I revise and update in particular D. Jackson 2005a. For a survey of another Ladakhi traditional art or craft, metal-working, see John Clarke 1995.
- <sup>328</sup> G. Béguin 1995, p. 72, repeats the chart of Susan L. and John C. Huntington 1990, p. 614.
- <sup>329</sup> D. Klimburg-Salter 1982, p. 167.
- <sup>330</sup> See R. Fisher 1997, pp. 211 and 214.
- <sup>331</sup> G. Béguin 1995, p. 72f., and S. and J. Huntington 1990, p. 614f. Compare P. Pal 1984, p. 150f., who noted the "eclectic taste," stylistic diversity, and incredible variety of Tibetan paintings in the last three centuries.
- <sup>332</sup> As noted above in chapter 1, some pockets of Ngari—Spiti and Dolpo—were even penetrated by the Karma Gardri (see Fig. 1.13 and 1.14).
- <sup>333</sup> See Tenpa Rabten 1996, fig. 87.
- <sup>334</sup> For a photo of Yeshe Jamyang with Nyurla Ngawang Tsering, see Fig. 7.10.
- <sup>335</sup> For more on Yeshe Jamyang's career, see D. Jackson 2002 and E. Lo Bue 2007, pp. 358–360.
- <sup>336</sup> For more on this style, which was patronized at his home monastery of Lamayuru and other Drigung Kagyu monasteries of Ladakh, see also D. Jackson 2002.
- <sup>337</sup> See D. Jackson 2002, p. 154. Cf. D. Jackson 1996, p. 364, n. 761, where the *Drigung painting style* ('bri bris) and *g.ye bris* seem to be inverted. Cf. also Clare Harris 1997, p. 268. C. Harris 1999, p. 68.
- <sup>338</sup> Yeshe Jamyang explained in an aside that the style of E district was the painting tradition of the Lhasa government (*lha sa'i gzhung gi ri mo*). Cf. C. Harris 1999, p. 69, who seems to have not understood "*e bris*," but only its gloss, "*dbus bris*."
- <sup>339</sup> E. Lo Bue 1983.
- <sup>340</sup> The Ganden Phodrang (dGa' ldan Pho brang) government conquered most of Ngari through the campaigns of Gyalpo Ganden Tshewang (rGyal po dGa' ldan tshe dbang) in 1679–1681.
- <sup>341</sup> Kushok Bakula was known for his efforts in reviving Buddhism in Mongolia and Russia, linking them with the community of Tibetan exiles in India. He was dedicated by his family to become a monk at an early age and was recognized by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama as a reincarnation of Bakula Arhat. He was educated at Drepung.
- <sup>342</sup> E. Lo Bue 1983, p. 61ff. See also Lo Bue 2005 in M. Ahmed and Clare Harris eds. 2005, pp. 95–97; and E. Lo Bue 2007, 365–373.
- <sup>343</sup> D. Jackson 1984b, p. 1.
- <sup>344</sup> E. Lo Bue 1983, p. 67. I believe that my informant "Wangchuk of Ladakh" was actually named either Tashi Wangchuk or Tsering Wangchuk (Tshe ring dbang phyug). I was told in the 1970s that he was related to "Wangdu of Ladakh" (Tshe ring dbang 'du), his main teacher. He may have studied briefly under Dewa Pasang.
- <sup>345</sup> Acarya Ngawang Samten 1986, nos. 3–8 and 13–19. The first group is wrongly identified as "Gardri style," and the second group, depicting the famous Panchen Rinpoche set (thangka 13 is the same composition as M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, WT, cat. 131, HAR 477), is called "Sman bris."
- <sup>346</sup> On Phyang (or Phyang) Monastery, see Prem Singh Jina and Konchog Namgyal (dKon mchog nam rgyal) and D. L. Snellgrove and T. Skorupski 1977, p. 123 and G. Béguin



- 1995, p. 386. On Lamayuru Monastery, see D. Snellgrove and T. Skorupski 1977 and Prem Singh Jina 1999. See also the earlier contributions on Lamayuru in August Hermann Francke 1906, J. Schubert 1937, and Christian Luczanits 1999. For previous publications of Ladakhi monasteries and religious art in general, see also G. Genoud and T. Inoue 1981; Suzanne Held 1988; Elena Tasseva-Schmidt 1990; and Helmut Uhlig *et al.* 1976.
- <sup>347</sup> On the painters at Phyiwang in the 1930s, see Marco Pallis 1939, p. 316ff., and E. Lo Bue 2007.
- <sup>348</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, pp. 338–343; and D. Jackson 2002.
- <sup>349</sup> See Rase Könchok Gyatsho 2001.
- <sup>350</sup> Rase Könchok Gyatsho, *'Bri gung chos 'byung* (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004).
- <sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- <sup>352</sup> For more on him and recent Drigung painting traditions, see D. Jackson 2002.
- <sup>353</sup> See Peter Schwieger 1997.
- <sup>354</sup> Acarya Ngawang Samten 1986, thangkas 10–12. The previous set, thangkas no. 3–9, are actually a fine Tsangri style and not in the Gardri.
- <sup>355</sup> E. Lo Bue 1983.
- <sup>356</sup> Isabel Lenuck documented the art of Ridzong Monastery in her unpublished M.A. thesis completed at Hamburg University in 2011. Isabel Lenuck, “Das Leben und Gesamtwerk des Ri rdzong Sras sprul Blo bzang tshul khrims chos 'phel (1862–1926): Eine Erschließung seiner Biographie sowie eine Zusammenstellung und kurze Beschreibung seines literarischen und künstlerischen Gesamtwerkes unter Berücksichtigung der Geschichte des Klosters Ri rdzong.” Hamburg: University of Hamburg, 2011.
- <sup>357</sup> Ngawang Tsering of Nyurla, oral communication, Hamburg, 1994. He based his account on an unpublished history of Ladakh by Sönam Phüntshok (bSod nams phun tshogs), of which he had a photocopy.
- <sup>358</sup> See also D. Jackson 1996, p. 353–354.
- <sup>359</sup> On Pashö, see A. Gruschke 2004a, p. 123ff. I was told by a man from Pashö that most monasteries there were of the Karma Kagyu school and would engage the painters of Karshö for major painting projects, whereas the two Geluk monasteries for painting new murals would call artists from Chamdo or even central Tibet.
- <sup>360</sup> Madanjeet Singh 1968, p. 285, list of figures.
- <sup>361</sup> I was kindly reminded of the existence of these photos by Dr. P. Verhagen.
- <sup>362</sup> E. Lo Bue 2007, p. 358 and note 13.
- <sup>363</sup> E. Lo Bue 1983, p. 60, plate 49.
- <sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, 1983.
- <sup>365</sup> E. Lo Bue 2007, p. 373.
- <sup>366</sup> On eighteenth-century relations between Ladakh, Bhutan and the Drukpa school, see Dieter Schuh 1983.

- <sup>367</sup> E. Gene Smith 2001, p. 257.
- <sup>368</sup> C. Copeland 1980, p. 20, fig. 24, “Drug ri,” and p. 56, fig. 56.
- <sup>369</sup> E. Lo Bue 2007, p. 370.
- <sup>370</sup> Ngawang Samten 1986, p. 29, nos. 11.
- <sup>371</sup> E. Lo Bue 1983, p. 56.
- <sup>372</sup> See H. H. Godwin-Austen 1864 and Marco Pallis 1939.

## CHAPTER 8

- <sup>373</sup> See for instance F. Pommaret and Y. Imaeda 1985, *Bhutan: A Kingdom of the Eastern Himalayas* (Boston: Shambhala), and F. Pommaret and C. Schicklgruber eds. 1997, *Bhutan: Mountain Fortress of the Gods* (London: Shambhala). See also G. Samuel 1996, p. 104–107.
- <sup>374</sup> E. Gene Smith 1970; and its revised version 2001, p. 126 and 256f.
- <sup>375</sup> E. Gene Smith 1970; and its revised version 2001, p. 125, 256 and 304. See also D. Jackson 1996, pp. 48, 55 and 394. This mention of Shünthingpa (Zhun mthing pa) of Dakpo goes back to a reference given by Longdöl Lama (Klong rdol Bla ma Ngag dbang bla bzang, 1719–1794).
- <sup>376</sup> T. Tse Bartholomew and John Johnson, eds. 2008, *The Dragon's Gift: The Sacred Arts of Bhutan* (Chicago: Serindia Publications). See also John Arducci and Sonam Tobgay eds. 2008, *Written Treasures of the Past: Mirror of the Past and Bridge to the Future*, 2 vols. (Thimphu: National Library of Bhutan). See also Ariana Maki 2010, “In the Dragon's Wake: Bhutanese Art in the RMA Collection,” *Arts of Asia*, vol. 40, no. 2, p.103–113; A. Maki 2011, “A Zhabdrung Phunsum Tshogpa (zhabs drung phun sum tshogs pa) Thangka from the National Museum of Bhutan,” *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, vol. 25 (Winter 2011), pp. 1–49; and A. Maki forthcoming (co-author and ed.), *Treasures from the Watchtower: Selections from the National Museum of Bhutan Collection*.
- <sup>377</sup> See D. Jackson 2008b.
- <sup>378</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, p. 109, plate 7.
- <sup>379</sup> See P. Pal 1983, p. 164 and plate 30 (“A Mahasiddha and Taglungpa Lamas”). Note that Lama Zhang is also shown, as are other contemporaries. See also M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1991, p. 246, plate 84, Gampopa, which is from the same series.
- <sup>380</sup> Cf. M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, no. 113, p. 332.
- <sup>381</sup> E. Gene Smith 2001, p. 256.
- <sup>382</sup> See WT 112 (HAR 156); D. Jackson 1999, p. 89; and D. Jackson 1996, plate 65.
- <sup>383</sup> The individual figures are, according to the inscriptions:
1. rDo rje 'chang [Vajradhara]
  2. Ti li pa (Tilopa)
  3. Na ro pa
  4. Mar pa Lo tsā [ba]
5. Mi la Ras pa
  6. Dags po Lha rje (sGam po pa)
  7. Phag mo gru pa Khams pa rDo rgyal
  8. Gling ras (Lingchen Repa)
  9. gTsang pa rGya ras (Ye shes rdo rje, 1161–1211)
  10. dBon chen Ras pa (Darma seng ge 1177/8–1237)
  11. gZhon nu seng ge (1200–1266)
  12. Nyi ma seng ge (dBon po, 1251–1287)
  13. rDo rje gling pa (Seng ge shes rab 1236/8–1280)
  14. sPos skya ba (Seng ge rin chen 1242/58–1297?/1313?)
  15. Drin can bCu gsum pa (Seng ge rgyal po, 1277/89–1314/25)
  16. Kun dga' seng ge (1314–1347)
  17. [Vajra] Ratna (rDo rje rin chen, 14th century)
  18. Blo gros seng ge (1345–1390)
  19. mKhyen brtse rTogs ldan
  20. 'Jam dbyangs Ye shes (rin chen, 1364–1413)
  21. Blo gros mchog ldan
  22. Shes rab bzang po (1400–1438)
  23. Kun dga' dpal 'byor (1428–1476) (2nd Drukchen)
  24. rGyal dbang Chos rje
  25. Ngag dbang chos rgyal (1465–1540)
  26. Ngag gi dbang phyug (1517–1554)
  27. No inscription found. [Here one would expect either Padma dkar po 1527–1592 or Mi pham chos rgyal 1543–1604.]
  28. Chos rgyal lhun grub
  29. bsTan pa'i nyi ma (1567–1619)
  30. Lha dbang blo gros
  31. Zhabs drung [Ngag dbang rnam rgyal]
  32. bSod nams 'od zer (2nd rJe mkhan po, 1613–1689)
  33. Ngag dbang 'rgyal mtshan (1st Se'u la Byams mgon, 1647–1723)
  34. *Illegible*. [Shākya rin chen, the 9th rJe mkhan po, would fit here.]
  35. Shes rab seng ge (16th rJe mkhan po, 1724–1793)
  36. Shes rab rgyal mtshan (25th rJe mkhan po, 1772–1848)
  37. 'Jam dbyangs gy? (illegible) [possibly 'Jam dbyangs bstan 'dzin, 1831–1855, the 3rd Se la Byams mgon]
  38. No name found. [Presumably he was a master flourishing in the second half of the nineteenth century, possibly a disciple of 37 with some personal connection with the main figure.]



- <sup>384</sup> Another good RMA painting from Bhutan is HAR 65858.
- <sup>385</sup> Niamosorgym Tsultem 1982 and 1986.
- <sup>386</sup> See, for instance, P. Berger and T. Tse Bartholomew 1995.
- <sup>387</sup> C. Meinert ed. 2011.
- <sup>388</sup> See D. Jackson 2005b.
- <sup>389</sup> Cf. C. Meinert ed. 2011, nos. 49, 54, 55, 58, 77, 78, 125, and 306.
- <sup>390</sup> See N. Tsultem 1986, pl. 115, “Images of previous reincarnations of Jebzundampa”) [The Second Jetsun Dampa with his series of previous rebirths.] 54 x 38 cm., Fine Arts Museum.
- <sup>391</sup> I assume that this inscription specifies the main figure as the Second Jetsun Dampa, which is asserted in the Spanish and Russian language editions of N. Tsultem 1986 (though not in English or French).
- <sup>392</sup> The names as written in gold in the rectangular dark brown boxes below each figure are (with descriptions between square brackets):
1. Bde mchog [Samvara, standing two-armed form embraced by a red consort.]
  2. 'Bar ba'i gtso bo [dark-skinned Indian monk with red pandita's hat, right hand in teaching gesture and left holding a book on his lap. His hat drapes sideways over his head.]
  3. [Nag po Spyod pa'i? *unclear*] rdo rje [gray-skinned Indian adept dancing with *damaru* held aloft in right hand, skull-cup held to his heart by his left hand. Seven parasols float above in the sky, as do two *damaru* drums.]
  4. Ratna chen po [dark-skinned Indian yogi seated on a dark antelope skin with hands folded in meditation on his lap, wearing a white robe]
  5. Rong zom Chos bzang [long-haired Tibetan lay master with long-sleeved upper garment and feet tucked into orange-trimmed red lower robes.]
  6. Dar ma dbang phyug
  7. 'Od zer dpal
  8. 'Brug sgra rgyal mtshan
  9. Sangs rgyas ras chen
  10. Sang gha bha dra [Tibetan scholar of Sanskrit grammar holding a white sheet of paper in his left hand and a pen in his right, wearing a green-trimmed orange long-sleeved jacket and bare feet. His head is either shaved or bald, and an orange band is tied around his forehead.]
  11. 'Jam dbyangs chos rje [a Tibetan monk wearing a yellow Geluk pandita hat]
  12. Chos kyi nyin byed [gray-skinned monk from Ceylon wearing a red pandita's hat and orange monk's robes.]
  13. rJe btsun Kun dga' grol mchog. [Tibetan lama with right hand extended to his knee in gesture of giving, the left holding a gold vase of immortality on his lap.]
  14. dGa' byed sa skyongs (Prince Rāmagopāla, a youthful Indian prince seated

in a pavilion holding a long red-covered book in his right hand on his lap, left hand extended out, palm outward, at this left knee. He wears an orange and white turban with gold crest and long-sleeved grayish robe and light green boots.]

15. rJe btsun Tāranātha [red hat]

16. Dznyānabadzra [First Jetsun Dam pa, as final minor figure. He holds a vase of longevity on the hands he folds in his lap.]

17. Blo bzang bstan pa'i sgron me la na mo [The Second Jetsun Dampa as main figure]

<sup>393</sup> See the two relief images in P. Berger and T. Tse Bartholomew 1995, no. 17, Zanabazar and his previous reincarnations.

<sup>394</sup> See P. Berger and T. Tse Bartholomew 1995, p. 125, fig. 1.

<sup>395</sup> See, for example, the self-portrait in Patricia Berger and Terese Tse Bartholomew 1995, fig. 16, “Portrait of Zanabazar,” and the fine cast sculpture, *ibid.*, no. 95, “Portrait of Zanabazar.”

<sup>396</sup> N. Tsultem 1986, fig. 88.

<sup>397</sup> Treatises on the faults of eating meat and in support of vegetarianism are known, such as one by the contemporary Drigung Kagyu lama Rase Könchok Gyatsho.

<sup>398</sup> P. Berger 1995, p. 261, Fig. 1, “Zanabazar.”

<sup>399</sup> See N. Tsultem 1982, *The Eminent Mongolian Sculptor—G. Zanabazar*, pl. 104.

<sup>400</sup> See P. Berger 1995, p. 261.

<sup>401</sup> See P. Berger 1995, pp. 290–294 and nos. 103, 105 and 106. I am indebted to Karl Debreczeny for this information.

<sup>402</sup> See also Gilles Béguin 1993, *Trésors de Mongolie, XVIIe-XIXe siècles*. Paris.

<sup>403</sup> See, for instance, Heather [Stoddard] Karmay 1975; and in the second edition, Heather Stoddard 2008, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, Bangkok: Orchid Press.

<sup>404</sup> On the Qing period, see also Patricia Berger 2002. *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. See also Karl Debreczeny 2003. “Sino-Tibetan Artistic Synthesis in Ming Dynasty Temples at the Core and Periphery.” *Tibet Journal*, vol. 28 (nos. 1–2), pp. 49–108.

<sup>405</sup> Yong he gong, *The Treasured Thangkas in Yonghegong Palace*, revised and enlarged edition Beijing, 1998.

<sup>406</sup> See Xin Yang et al. [The Palace Museum] 1992.

<sup>407</sup> Several RMA paintings are grouped in HAR under the rubric “Beijing, Imperial Palace Style.”

<sup>408</sup> Karl Debreczeny kindly pointed this out to me.

<sup>409</sup> I thank Karl Debreczeny for this insight.

<sup>410</sup> Terese Tse Bartholomew 1992, “Three Thangkas from Chengde,” PSIATS5 (Narita); and Terese Tse Bartholomew 1997, p. 104ff.

<sup>411</sup> Terese Tse Bartholomew 1997, p. 109.

<sup>412</sup> Its impressive refined style may have led

Chogyam Trungpa to wrongly classify it as “Kadampa Style.” See Chogyam Trungpa 1975, p. 16.

<sup>413</sup> I thank Karl Debreczeny for this information and several references.

<sup>414</sup> A. Terentyev 2010, fig. 3.

<sup>415</sup> See also the article of Gregory Henderson and Leon Hurvitz 1956, “The Buddha of Seiryōji: New Finds and New Theory,” *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 19, no. 1 (1956), pp. 4–55. Rob Linrothe kindly brought that article to my attention.

<sup>416</sup> See Kimiaki Tanaka 1999, p. 52.

<sup>417</sup> See Andrey Terentyev 2010.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>419</sup> See D. Jackson 1996, p. 135, note 270.

<sup>420</sup> See P. Berger 2003.

<sup>421</sup> As suggested by Karl Debreczeny in a personal communication.

<sup>422</sup> Some well-informed artists and authorities on painting from central Tibet (such as Tenpa Rabten) strongly believe that all surviving Tibetan regional painting styles derived somehow from the three main styles of Menri, Khyenri, and Gardri and their later developments (Tib.: *de la ma 'dus pa med*).

## CHAPTER 9

<sup>423</sup> Stephen Melville, “Plasticity: The Hegelian Writing of Art,” in Margaret Iversen and Stephen Melville, *Writing Art History: Disciplinary Departure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 172. I acknowledge my gratitude to Melissa Kerin, Annie Bien, and David Jackson for reading drafts of this essay and making constructive suggestions.

<sup>424</sup> These lasted until 1959; see Lupon Konchok Tharchin and Geshe Konchok Namgail, *Recollections of Tibet*, ed. Francesca Merritt (Okhla: Sona Printers, no date), pp. 13–18, 25–28.

<sup>425</sup> See Luciano Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh C. 950–1842 A.D.* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1977), pp. 84–86, describing a late seventeenth century son of the Ladakhi king who obtained the Geshe Rabjampa (dGe bshes Rab 'byams pa) degree at Drepung ('Bras spungs) and was appointed abbot of the Gelukpa controlled Palkhor Chode (dPal 'khor Chos sde) monastery at Gyantse; he apparently studied alongside the son of a Zangskari king at Drepung as well.

<sup>426</sup> Zhedpa Dorje spent several years at Punakha Monastery in Bhutan studying with religious, artistic, and calligraphic masters; Geza Bethlenfalvy, “Bla-ma bzad-pa and the rdzoñ-khul Gompa,” *Acta Orientalia* 34 (1980): pp. 5–6.

<sup>427</sup> For example a noble lady of the Bhruṃ clan from Dvagpo (Dvags po), southern Tibet was “richly endowed by the [Lhasa] government and then set forth for Ladakh” to be married to the Ladakh king Nyima Namgyal (Nyi ma rNam rgyal) in 1694; Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p. 95.



- <sup>428</sup> David Jackson with Karl Debreczeny, *Patron and Painter: Situ Panchen and the Revival of the Encampment Style* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2009).
- <sup>429</sup> John Crook and Henry Osmaston, “Sha-de: Meagre Subsistence or Garden of Eden?” in *Himalayan Buddhist Villages* (Bristol: University of Bristol, 1994), p. 267.
- <sup>430</sup> Crook and Osmaston, “Sha-de,” p. 251.
- <sup>431</sup> HAR 65829; also Karl Debreczeny, “Bodhisattvas South of the Clouds: Situ Panchen’s Activities and Artistic Inspiration in Yunnan,” in David P. Jackson, *Patron and Painter: Situ Panchen and the Revival of the Encampment Style* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2009), fig. 10.4.
- <sup>432</sup> Gilles Béguin, *Les Peintures du Bouddhisme Tibétain*, (Paris: Musée National des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet/Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995), no. 302; also Nik Douglas and Meryl White, *Karmapa: The Black Hat Lama of Tibet* (London: Luzac & Company, 1976), p. 8.
- <sup>433</sup> HAR 680; Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, fig. 6.7.
- <sup>434</sup> Rob Linrothe, “Stretched on a Frame of Boundless Thought: Contemporary Religious Painting in Rebgong,” *Orientalism* 34 no. 4 (2002): figs. 4 & 6.
- <sup>435</sup> Personal communication, 3 October, 2011. For the *Ye Dharma* invocation, see Daniel Boucher, “The *Pratītyasamūtpadagāthā* and its role in the medieval cult of relics,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 14 no. 1 (1991): pp. 1–27. It has been translated as, “of all things having an origin and an end, the Buddha, the Tathāgata, the great ascetic, has explained the origin and the end.” Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome: La Libreria Dello Stato, 1949), p. 310.
- <sup>436</sup> *Rig ’dzin Padma ’byung gnas byin rlabs byas mi mthun nyis bral mchun rkyin (or mthun rkyen) rab rgyas te / gnas lugs phyag rgya chen po’i don rogs pa’i / bkra shis bde legs yon tan rab rgyas shog / ces sngags sprul (?) gyi bris pa dge’o //*. I thank Karsha Lonpo Sonam Wangchuk for transcribing the cursive into regular script (*dbu chen*), and for discussing the meaning with me. David Jackson kindly checked the transcription; errors in the translation are mine.
- <sup>437</sup> On the Rimé movement, see E. Gene Smith, “Jam mgon Kong sprul and the Nonsectarian Movement,” in E. Gene Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts: History & Literature of the Himalayan Plateau* ed. Kurtis R. Schaeffer (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), pp. 235–272. Another earlier example was Karma Chakme (Karma Chags med; 1613–1678) of Nangchen, Kham; I thank David Jackson for pointing this out.
- <sup>438</sup> Tetsa is variously spelled on maps as Techa, Stecha, etc. Devers and Vernier, who are the only authors I know of to study this site to date, were unable to discover the etymology or proper spelling of the name though “according to some local informants it might come from *btegs-byes*, ‘to lift’, or from *theb-byes*, ‘to reach[,] to extend’.” Quentin Devers and Martin Vernier, “An Archaeological Account of the Markha Valley, Ladakh,” *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 20 (April 2011): pp. 61–113.
- Markha is usually considered part of Ladakh, though the Markha Valley is on the northeast frontier of Zangskar, and a few routes between Zangskar and Ladakh pass very close to Tetsa. Because of its proximity to Zangskar, the two places are sometimes confused with each other. In a news story on August 8, 2010, the *Times of India* reported that the Indian Air Force rescued eighty-one tourist trekkers from Zangskar, although they were actually rescued from the Markha Valley; [http://article.wn.com/view/2010/08/10/165\\_dead\\_in\\_Leh\\_flash\\_floods\\_81\\_foreigners\\_rescued/](http://article.wn.com/view/2010/08/10/165_dead_in_Leh_flash_floods_81_foreigners_rescued/); consulted October 4, 2011.
- <sup>439</sup> Devers and Vernier, “Archaeological Account,” p. 79.
- <sup>440</sup> It is so common that Tucci includes it among the actions he performed in order to convince Tibetans he was a Buddhist, part of what he referred to as a “useful lie”; Giuseppe Tucci and E. Ghersi, *Secrets of Tibet: Being the Chronicle of the Tucci Scientific Expedition to Western Tibet* (1933), trans. Mary A. Johnstone (London and Glasgow: Blackie & Son Limited, 1935), xi–xii; Christian Jahoda, “Archival exploration of Western Tibet or what has remained of the Francke’s and Shuttlesworth’s *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. IV?” in *Pramānakīrti: Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday* eds. Birgit Kellner et al. (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 2007), p. 385.
- <sup>441</sup> A painting of an Arhat identified (rather tentatively I believe) as Pantaka makes a similar gesture with a book touching the head of a standing monk; it is in the Rubin Museum of Art (P2000.3.8), listed as no. 957 in the Himalayan Art Resource website (<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/957.html>, accessed November 2, 2011). This painting is much stiffer, but features the Arhat in the same orientation and pose besides other compositional similarities, suggesting a common iconography. It also has an unpainted sky, a transparent halo, a lama floating on a cloud above the main figure, and an imposing tree at the Arhat’s back. It appears to be a later painting, but one based on an earlier prototype, without the characterizations or landscape quality of the Tetsa work. A related if simplified figure, with a reversed orientation, is found in a mural at the Naka Tsang (sNa ka mTsang) of Dankhar (Brang mkhar) in Spiti. Though unpublished, it is among the original fieldwork images I am donating to ARTstor where it should be available within a year; its ID is RL03924. I thank the Digital Collections staff, particularly Nicole Finzer and Helenmary Sheridan for their help in making that possible.
- <sup>442</sup> Rob Linrothe, “Between China and Tibet: Arhats, Art, and Material Culture” in *Paradise and Plumage: Chinese Connections in Tibetan Arhat Painting* ed. Rob Linrothe (New York/Chicago: Rubin Museum of Art/Serindia, 2004), pp. 9–44.
- <sup>443</sup> Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, p. 105, HAR 418.
- <sup>444</sup> For example, Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, figs. 6.4, 9a.
- <sup>445</sup> For example, Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, fig. 9c.
- <sup>446</sup> For an introduction to Rupshu, see Monisha Ahmed, *Living Fabric: Weaving among the Nomads of Ladakh Himalaya* (Trumbull: Weatherhill, 2002), 15–19.
- <sup>447</sup> Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, p. 138.
- <sup>448</sup> Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, figs. 7.17–19.
- <sup>449</sup> Toni Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage & the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 176.
- <sup>450</sup> Giuseppe Tucci, “Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley,” *Opera Minora Parte II* (Rome: Dott. Giovanni Bardi Editore, 1971; 1940), p. 376.
- <sup>451</sup> Huber, *Holy Land Reborn*, p. 237.
- <sup>452</sup> Huber, *Holy Land Reborn*, 232–247; Huber acknowledges the discussion of the concept of “International Buddha” in Chapter Four of Dan Martin, *Unearthing Bon Treasures: Life and Contested Legacy of a Tibetan Scripture Revealer, with a General Bibliography of Bon* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 33–38.
- <sup>453</sup> Tucci, “Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims,” 375, 377, 382; Verena Widorn and Michaela Kinberger, “Mapping the Sacred Landscape of Lahaul: the Karzha Khandroling Mandala,” in *Cartography and Art*, eds. William Cartwright, Georg Gartner, and Antje Lehn (Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer, 2009), p. 300.
- <sup>454</sup> Tucci, “Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims,” 372, 375; “Treasury of Lives: Biographies of Himalayan Religious Masters,” biography by Dan Martin 2008; <http://www.treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Gotsangpa%20Gonpo%20Dorje/3759>, accessed October 2011; John Crook and James Low, *The Yogins of Ladakh: A Pilgrimage Among the Hermits of the Buddhist Himalayas* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1997), pp. 85–86.
- <sup>455</sup> Luciano Petech, “The Bri-guñ-pa Sect in Western Tibet and Ladakh,” in *Csoma de Korös Memorial Symposium* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiado, 1978), p. 315. Petech also notes that even as the Drigung connection to Western Tibet faded, a number of their hermitages and monasteries there were transferred to the Drukpa; Petech, “The Bri-guñ-pa Sect in Western Tibet,” p. 319.
- <sup>456</sup> Tucci, “Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims,” p. 406.
- <sup>457</sup> Peter Schwieger, “Stag-tshang Ras-pa’s Exceptional Life as a Pilgrim,” *Kailash* 18 no. 1–2 (1996): 81–107; Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh*; Tucci, “Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims,” pp. 410, 417.
- <sup>458</sup> Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p. 53.
- <sup>459</sup> Zahiruddin Ahmad, “New Light on the Tibet-Ladakh-Mughal War of 1679–84” *East and West* 18 nos. 3–4 (1968): pp. 340–61.
- <sup>460</sup> Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, pp. 61–62.
- <sup>461</sup> Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p. 62.
- <sup>462</sup> Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, pp. 76–77; Luciano Petech, “Western Tibet: Historical Introduction,” in *Tabo: A Lamp for the Kingdom, Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya*, ed. Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), p. 248.
- <sup>463</sup> Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, pp. 101, 107.



- <sup>464</sup> Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p. 124, which has the Fourteenth Karmapa advising the Drukchen against immediate departure in response to an invitation of 1799 by an envoy of the Ladakh king. As we will see later, the Fourteenth Karmapa's birth year varies between 1797 and 1799, but whether unborn or only one year old, he is unlikely to have been dispensing travel advice. Perhaps the Thirteenth Karmapa is meant here, but since his death dates are ca. 1797–1798, there is still a chronological problem.
- <sup>465</sup> Yonten Dargye and Per K. Sørensen, "The Diplomatic Career of Jamgön Ngawang Gyaltsen: Great 18th-century Bhutanese Siddha and Artist," in *The Dragon's Gift: The Sacred Arts of Bhutan*, eds. Terese Tse Bartholomew and John Johnston (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2008), pp. 100–113; Yonten Dargye, Per K. Sørensen, and Gyompo Tshering, *Play of the Omniscient: Life and Works of Jamgon Ngawang Gyaltsen, An Eminent 17th-18th Century Drukpa Master* (Thimphu: National Library and Archives of Bhutan, 2008); Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, pp. 87–88.
- <sup>466</sup> Peter Schwieger, "Kathog Rigzin Tsewang Norbu's (Kah-thog-rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang-Norbu) diplomatic mission to Ladakh in the eighteenth century," *Recent Research on Ladakh* 6, eds. Henry Osmaston and Nawang Tsering (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1997), pp. 219–230; Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, 103.
- <sup>467</sup> Petech, "Western Tibet: Historical Introduction," 248; Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, pp. 41, 52, 56, 121.
- <sup>468</sup> Karma Tenzin, the successor to Zhedpa Dorje as abbot at Dzonkhul Gompa (rDzong khul dGon pa) in Zangskar, was born in Kham Derge but apparently was attracted to the yogic attainments of Zhedpa Dorje's father and predecessor; Dargye, Sørensen with Tshering, *Play of the Omniscient*, pp. 267–268.
- <sup>469</sup> John H. Crook, "The History of Zangskar," in *Himalayan Buddhist Villages* (Bristol: University of Bristol, 1994), p. 457.
- <sup>470</sup> Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p. 132.
- <sup>471</sup> Isabelle Riaboff, "Distant Neighbours Either Side of the Omasi La: the Zangskar and the Bod Communities of Paldar," in *Modern Ladakh: Anthropological Perspectives on Continuity and Change*, eds. Martijn van Beek and Fernanda Pirie (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 111; Isabelle Riaboff, "Rituals for the local gods among the Bod of Paldar, *Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines* 35 (2009), p. 12, note 21; <http://emscat.revues.org/index354.html>; accessed 28 January, 2011.
- <sup>472</sup> On Drubwang Shakya Shri, see John A. Ardussi, et al, *The Dragon Yogis: A Collection of Selected Biographies and Teachings of the Drukpa Lineage Masters* (Gurgaon: Drukpa Publications, 2009): pp. 58–61; Crook and Low, *Yogins of Ladakh*, pp. 21–25.
- <sup>473</sup> On the Ichar *kankani* chörten, see Rob Linrothe, "inVISIBLE: Picturing Interiority in Western Himalayan Stupas," in *The Built Surface*, eds. Christy Anderson and Karen Koehler (London: Ashgate Press, 2001), pp. 86–89; Rob Linrothe, "A Summer in the Field," *Orientalism* 30 no. 5 (1999): pp. 62–64.
- <sup>474</sup> The Shamar is the most well-known of the Karmapa-affiliated lineages which feature red hats, and thus the most likely, though the others should not be excluded. Other Karmapa-affiliated red-hat lineages are: the Tai Situ lineage which began in the fourteenth century; the Gyaltsab which began in the fifteenth; and the Nenang Pawo, also from the fifteenth; Hugh E. Richardson, "The Karma-pa Sect: A Historical Note," Part I: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (October 1958): p. 142; Douglas and White, *Karmapa*, pp. 142–165.
- <sup>475</sup> Tagtshang Repa found that the chiefs of Gya (rGya) on the Spiti-Tibetan border already had relations with Padma Karpo (Pad ma dKar po) the Fourth Drukchen, another example of local patrons forging direct personal ties to a distant teacher without institutional ties to the patrons' region; Schwieger, "Stag-tshang Raspa's Exceptional Life," p. 105.
- <sup>476</sup> Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, pp. 89–90.
- <sup>477</sup> Jackson, *Patron and Painter*.
- <sup>478</sup> Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p. 108.
- <sup>479</sup> Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, p. 119.
- <sup>480</sup> The Fourteenth Karmapa's dates vary depending on the source, his birth year varying among 1797, 1798, and 1799; his death year diverges even more depending on the source, both 1845 and 1868 (or 1869). For the 1845 date, see Richardson, "The Karma-pa Sect," part II, p. 18; Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, p. 172 no. 36, 221; Sonam Phuntsog, *Ladakh Annals Part Two, Since 360 B.C.* (Delhi, self-published, 2009), p. 51; and Ashwani Kumar, "Karmapas: A Historical and Philosophical Introduction," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 38 no. 1 (2002): p. 13. For the 1868 or 1869 date, see Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, p. 253; Douglas and White, *Karmapa*, p. 99; Karmapa 900 Organizing Committee, *Karmapa: 1110–2010, 900 Years* (Sidhbari: KTD Publications, 2011), 77; Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, "Brief Histories of the Sixteen Karmapas," in Michele Martin, *Music in the Sky: the Life, Art & Teachings of the 17th Karmapa, Orygyen Trinley Dorje* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2003), p. 289. The Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center gives 1798/1799–1868/1869; [www.tbrc.org](http://www.tbrc.org) P562, accessed October 2011. Since Jamgon Khontrul met the Fourteenth Karmapa at least as late as 1864–64, I follow the 1868 date; Richard Barron, trans. and ed., *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul: A Gem of Many Colors* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2003), p. 139.
- <sup>481</sup> See Himalayan Art Resource, item nos. 797, 66432 (ex-Lauf collection; sold on September 14, 2010 at Christie's New York "Indian and Southeast Asian Art" sale number 2337, lot 0139 for \$164,500); Karmapa 900 Organizing Committee, *Karmapa*, 74; Donald Dinwiddie, ed. *Portraits of the Masters: Bronze Sculptures of the Tibetan Buddhist Lineages* (Chicago/London: Serindia Publications, 2003), 171; although unidentified, one other variant is the mere substitution of a book for the vase, with the *vitarka mudrā* remaining the same; Himalayan Art Resource, item nos. 163, 66432; Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, fig. 5.22; Kagyu Thubten Chöling Publications Committee, *Karmapa, The Sacred Prophecy* (Wappingers Falls: Kagyu Thubtgen Chöling, 1999), p. 30. The upper torso of a Karmapa is found in an iconographic sketchbook typically attributed to the sixteenth century. The Karmapa is shown frontally, like the Korzok painting; the right hand's *vitarka mudrā* is visible but what the other hand held is not shown; Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of the Himalayas: Treasures from Nepal and Tibet* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1991), p. 79.
- <sup>482</sup> Barron, *Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, p. 32; see also Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Taye and Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group, *The Treasury of Knowledge Book One: Myriad Worlds* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2003; 1995), p. 23.
- <sup>483</sup> Barron, *Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, pp. 32–33.
- <sup>484</sup> Recently, a translation of the Fourteenth Karmapa's work on *chöd* practice, "The Condensed Daily Practice of Offering of the Body," was combined with a commentary to the *chöd* practice by Jamgön Kongtrul; Lama Lodö Rinpoche, trans. *Chöd Practice Manual and Commentary* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2007).
- <sup>485</sup> Ngawang Zangpo, *Sacred Ground: Jamgon Kongtrul on 'Pilgrimage and Sacred Geography'* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2001), pp. 144–145.
- <sup>486</sup> Similar to the back of the Wanchuk Dorje painting, both of these inscriptions are in cursive "headless" script (dbu med); I am dependent on Karsha Lonpo's transcriptions into standard script, which David Jackson also kindly checked. While errors may have accumulated in this cumbersome process, for which I am responsible, fortunately the two people just mentioned are clearly named in both inscriptions. Tārā A1 inscription (Fig. 39): 'phags ma sgrol ma 'i byin rlabs kyis / tshe grangs chos dang nor gyi phyug / rnam kun bkra shis bde legs kyi / dpal yon chen pos khyab gyur cig / ces 'phags ma sgrol dkar gyi bris sku nying (?) thang du karma pa theg (pa) mchog gi rdo rje lag bris su ltar ba la dwags ru shod dpon tshe ring bkra shis kyi dad rten du sbyin pa dge legs 'phel /. Tārā C8 inscription (Fig. 41): 'phags ma sgrol ma 'i byin rlabs kyis / yon gyi bdag po tshe ring zhing / phyi nang bar chad thams cad zhi / bsod nams dpal 'byor rgyas gyur nas / mthar thug rdzogs sangs rgyas 'grub shog / ces la dwags ru shod dpon tshe ring bkra shis kyi dad rten du karma pa theg mchog rdo rjes (b)sbyin pa nram kun dge bar gyur cig.
- <sup>487</sup> Situ Panchen appears to have painted at least six one-day *thangkas* of White Tārā, and on four occasions, painted both White Tārā one-day paintings and paintings depicting Padmasambhava; Jackson, *Painter and Patron*, pp. 15–16. Some were offered as gifts as they "were believed conducive to longevity and were supposed to be finished within a single day;" Jackson, *Painter and Patron*, p. 15.
- <sup>488</sup> Jamyang Gyaltsan, *The History of Ladakh Monasteries* (Leh: All Ladakh Gonpa Society, 1995), pp. 863–866, 878–880; my thanks to Karsha Lonpo Sonam Wangchuk and Drolma Dundrup for help in reviewing the Tibetan text with me.
- <sup>489</sup> Jamyang Gyaltsan, *The History of Ladakh Monasteries*, p. 863.
- <sup>490</sup> Jamyang Gyaltsan, *The History of Ladakh Monasteries*, p. 885; Thupstan Paldan, *The Guide to the Buddhist Monasteries and Royal castles of Ladakh* (Delhi, 1997), p. 30. According to its website, however, Chumur Gonpa or Padma Shedrup Ling was



- founded in the 1940's by the previous Chhoje Rinpoche; <http://www.padmashedrupling.org/monastery-overview>; accessed October 2011.
- <sup>491</sup> A. Cunningham, "Journal of a Trip Through Kulu and Lahul, to the Chu Mereri Lake, in Ladakh." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 17 no. 1 (1848): p. 215.
- <sup>492</sup> See Chapter Nine, "Mr. Trebeck's Excursion to Piti" in Horace Hayman Wilson, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz, and Bokhara; by Mr. William Moorcroft and Mr. George Trebeck, from 1819 to 1825*, 2 Vols. (London: John Murray, 1841), vol. 2, pp. 51–52.
- <sup>493</sup> Walter N. Koelz, "Diary of the 1931 Expedition to Western Tibet." *Journal of the Ursvati Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum* 2 (1932): p. 111. Koelz at first dismisses the thirty *thangkas* he saw in Korzok as "not good, and not much of interest," but then later found out that "Our Lama went to the monastery to-day and discovered several good tankas [sic] and images I had not seen. The monks told him they had not shown them to me for fear I would carry them off. He learned that the monastery was built in the time of the present Thakur's grandfather." Koelz, "Diary of the 1931 Expedition," p. 112.
- <sup>494</sup> The Fourteenth Karmapa's biography is found in Karma Ngedon Tenkyé (Karma nges don bstan rgyas pa), *Chos rje Karma pa sku 'phreng rim byon gyi rnam thar mdor bsdus dpag bsam khri shin* (New Delhi: Tobden Tsering, 1973), pp. 538–554; his pilgrimages to religious sites begins on folio 444, and the mention of Ngari Korgum on 545. I thank Drolma Dundrup for his reading of this text and locating the relevant passages at my request. He informs me that "many of the folios mentioned his mystical powers" and that "he transcribed his vision of seated Tārā into text, and that piece became a highly regarded holy object;" personal communication, referring to folio 546, while 547 also mentions a vision of Tārā.
- <sup>495</sup> *theg mchog rdo rje la nar mo*. I assume the "nar" is an error for "na".
- <sup>496</sup> Ahmed, *Living Fabric*, pp. 35–36.
- <sup>497</sup> Ahmed, *Living Fabric*, pp. 34, 173 note 8.
- <sup>498</sup> This is believed to be in the family chapel of the Rupshu chiefs in their house adjacent to Korzok Gompa; Ahmed, *Living Fabric*, p. 173 note 12.
- <sup>499</sup> All the paintings with exposed backs bear a twentieth-century purple-ink stamp "Registering Offices Antiquities Leh (Ladakh)" [sic] in lower-left corner.
- <sup>500</sup> Martin Willson and Martin Brauen, eds., *Deities of Tibetan Buddhism: The Zürich Paintings of the Icons Worthwhile to See (Bris sku mthong bdon ldan)* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), no. 262, pp. 118–119 and 311.
- <sup>501</sup> For example, Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, Figs. 2.6 (upper left), 9.32B (upper left), 6.2 (center), and 6.1 (center, but with chignon centered). Other female-deity paintings associated with Situ Panchen can also be compared to the later Karmapa Tārās as participating in the establishment of a pictorial model or template; these include Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, Figs. 6.3 and 6.4.
- <sup>502</sup> Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, pp. 10, 15, 22, passim.
- <sup>503</sup> Quoted in David Paul Jackson, *A History of Tibetan Painting: The Great Tibetan Painters and Their Traditions* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996), p. 52, emphasis added.
- <sup>504</sup> George Roerich, *Tibetan Paintings* (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1997; 1925), pp. 15–16, emphasis added.
- <sup>505</sup> Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 283; for similar remarks, see Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, pp. 284, 324, emphasis added.
- <sup>506</sup> Gega Lama, *Principles of Tibetan Art: Illustrations and Explanations of Buddhist Iconography and Iconometry According to the Karma Gardri School* 2 vols. (Darjeeling: Jamyang Singe, 1983), p. 44, emphasis added.
- <sup>507</sup> Marilyn M. Rhie, "Tibetan Buddhist Art: Aesthetics, Chronology, and Styles," in Marilyn M. Rhie and Robert A.F. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion: The Sacred Art of Tibet, Expanded Edition* (New York: Tibet House and Harry N. Abrams, 1996), p. 63, emphasis added.
- <sup>508</sup> Jackson, *History of Tibetan Painting*, p. 239.
- <sup>509</sup> See Rob Linrothe, "Landscape Elements in Early Tibetan Painting," in *Looking at Asian Art*, eds. Katherine R. Tsang and Martin J. Powers (Chicago: The Center for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago, 2012), pp. 158–176 (in press).
- <sup>510</sup> One of the few attempts to attribute specific Chinese paintings and artists as models for particular Tibetan paintings is the recent treatment of some of the Tenth Karmapa's paintings (which are highly idiosyncratic), is Karl Debreczeny, "Tibetan Interest in Chinese Visual Modes: The Foundation of the Tenth Karma Pa's 'Chinese Style Thang ka Painting,'" *Mahāmudrā and the bKa'-brgyud Tradition*: PIATS 2006: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Königswinter 2006 eds. Roger R. Jackson and Matthew T. Kapstein (Andia: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2011), pp. 387–421, pls. 1–16.
- <sup>511</sup> See Linrothe, "Between China and Tibet," pp. 9–44.
- <sup>512</sup> My focus here on the "fictive space" of later Tibetan painting is not meant to indicate a parallel conscious concern with space as such on the part of Tibetan artists or patrons. The fact that "it can be argued in general terms that the interest in space as a foundational concept in the analysis of representation is characteristically Western" since the eighteenth century, doesn't trouble me, as I use it here as a heuristic diagnostic index of regional patterns, not as a representation of discourse within Tibetan culture; quote from James Elkins, *Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), p. 41.
- <sup>513</sup> Rhie, "Tibetan Buddhist Art," p. 63.
- <sup>514</sup> Dietrich Seckel, *Buddhist Art of East Asia*, trans. Ulrich Mammitzsch (Bellingham: Western Washington University, 1989), p. 139.
- <sup>515</sup> One wonders what a one-day painting in the New Menri style would look like: either unfinished, very small, or perhaps just an iconometric sketch of the deity or subject with minimal colors.
- <sup>516</sup> Seckel, *Buddhist Art of East Asia*, p. 139.
- <sup>517</sup> For example, the painting from the Collection of Shechen Archives, Himalayan Art Resources item no. 15546; also the Rubin Museum of Art painting, HAR item no. 65802.
- <sup>518</sup> For example, when discussing the "influence" of what he calls Central Asian art on Tibetan art, Tucci refers to "echoes which show in the Tibetan artists a knowledge, perhaps remote, of those styles, but also an immaturity as to means of expression, or at least an inadequate absorption of ideals which, often against their will, seemed almost to force themselves upon them;" Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 184.



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